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MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS

MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS:

Political, Social and Religious

S. A. MORRISON

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MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS
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Preface

THE MIDDLE EAST is seething with tension and unrest. Those of us who have lived the greater part of our life in the Middle East have often felt that we were living on the edge of a volcano. No one quite knew when it would erupt next. Unexpected changes of government—sometimes of the Gilbert and Sullivan type—happened overnight. At a first glance it all seemed meaningless and unaccountable, yet on closer analysis there emerged certain underlying forces whose tension explained much that before seemed inexplicable. Changes were numerous and frequent, but all occurred within certain definable patterns.

The purpose of this book is to bring to the surface these underlying movements of thought and action. It is not in any sense a history of the Middle East. Past events are only introduced to explain present attitudes. It makes no claim to cover in detail the whole Middle East situation: that task would require several volumes. Its aim is selective; to choose those occurrences which are most illuminating, and lay stress upon those forces which are most significant and typical.

Emotional stresses in the Middle East have reached breaking point, and seemingly irrational explosions may at any time occur. The immediate antecedents of this dangerous situation were the policies of the Western Powers from the time of the first world war onwards. The deeper causes lie in the penetration during the nineteenth century of a rigid, conservative, and formalised state of society by the forces of western culture at once life-giving and destructive. The persistent intransigence of both the Arab States and Israel at the present time does not assist the discovery of a peaceful solution to a complicated and emotionally-charged problem.

Ultimate solutions to human problems do not, however, lie on the political plane, though the vital importance of political action is proved by recent Middle East history. They are to be found rather in the inner recesses of men's minds and

hearts, the seat of their spiritual experiences and the source of their ethical values. The picture of the Middle East given in this book would not be complete without an analysis of the spiritual influences at work there, and of the profound testing to which all three religions—Islam, Christianity and Judaism —are being subjected by the exacting demands of the modern world. Their interaction constitutes one aspect of a complex system of relationships which are both localised and international.

The writer prefers the term 'Near East', but was persuaded to adopt the nomenclature now used by the British Foreign Office whereby the words 'Middle East' are used to denote Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria, the Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, the Trucial Sheikhdoms, Kuweit, Bahrein, Muscat, the Aden Protectorate, and the Yemen. The main theme of the book centres around the inner core of Arabic-speaking countries, plus Israel, and only to a lesser degree touches on the outer fringe of non-Arab countries. Occasionally, to throw light on some particular point, the situation in Pakistan, or some other Muslim country outside the area, has been noted. But these outside references are rare.

The most important element in this book is the analysis made. If this is correct in its broad outlines it may help in illuminating a dark and perplexing picture. Every reader may then draw his own conclusions.

I

The Historical Setting

For a century or more new life has been stirring in the Middle East. Seeds of western thought, sown in the soil of a static Islamic society, had germinated slowly and for a period pushed their roots underground. Then gradually young shoots appeared, cracking the visible surface of the ground and spreading in all directions. In course of time no aspect of thought, no department of life, escaped their ramifications. The traditional Islamic systems of politics, law, society, economics, ethics and religion were all in turn challenged. Western concepts of nationalism, self-determination, democracy, progress, scientific education, social welfare, technology, met with every conceivable response from wholehearted adoption to absolute rejection, with many varieties of compromise and synthesis in between. Under the impact of these new forces time-honoured systems of religion and culture took on a new lease of life.

One seed thought of western origin, that of national self-determination, produced a double shoot—Arab nationalism and Jewish. The tragic story of the head-on clash of these two nationalisms mars the pages of Middle East history during the past four decades. Their struggle for self-fulfilment has been complicated in turn by the self-interests and claims of the Great Powers, for whom the Middle East has always been a centre of concern, as well as by the dawning consciousness of a war-weary world of the need for some system of international order.

Divergencies in political aims have constantly accentuated religious differences in the Middle East, and been accentuated by them. Religious concepts and aspirations have

always played an active part in determining the course of history in this area. Not only is the Middle East the cradle of the three main monotheistic faiths, but it is still the spiritual and intellectual centre of Islam; it is still the magnet of Jewish hopes; it still enshrines for the Christian world the most precious memories. It is in the Middle East that the mutual relationship between these three faiths in the realms of conviction, attitude and action, is being worked out in a more intense form than in any other area. It is here, too, that the main branches of the Christian Church—the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant—come most intimately into contact with one another, and are determining relations of ecumenical significance.

At first sight the Middle East presents a confusing picture of unrest and tension. Its problems are so complicated and so charged with emotional feeling that there is a strong temptation to abandon hope of any solution. Yet the understanding and tackling of these problems is of vital importance, not only for the stability, progress, and prosperity of the area itself, but also for the peace of the world. Every Middle East problem has its international facet; every event in this region is liable to world-wide repercussions. Expert military opinion has predicted that the Middle East may well witness the next round in the struggle between the Western Powers and the Soviet group, as well as between western democracy and Communism. This thought was in Earl Wavell's mind when he declared that this 'may be the battle-ground both of the material struggle for oil and air bases, and of the spiritual struggle of at least three great creeds—Christianity, Islam and Communism—and of the political theories of democracy and totalitarianism.'

The purpose of this book is to try to disentangle the various threads that together make up the tangled skein of the Middle East situation, and to explain their interpenetration. Each aspect of life in the Middle East is closely affected by every other. As the question of politics and of international relations tends at the present time to dominate the attitude of Middle East peoples on all other issues, it is here that we must begin.

To secure the right perspective it is necessary to cast our minds back forty years to the entry of the Ottoman Empire into the first world war on the side of the Central Powers on the 31st October 1914. This event marked the turning point in the history of the Middle East. Throughout the nineteenth century the Great Powers had squabbled over the dismemberment of the sprawling Ottoman Empire. The only factor that had prevented or delayed its complete collapse had been disagreement among the powers themselves over the division of the booty. The position as it stood in 1914 has been aptly described by Mr. George Antonius in his book *The Arab Awakening*. He writes: 'In the two score years that had elapsed between Abdul Hamid's accession and the war of 1914, the Sultan had had to surrender several rich provinces in Asia Minor to Russia; Cyprus and Egypt to Great Britain; Tunisia to France; Libya to Italy, and Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria . . . now that Turkey was in the war a host of pent-up desires began to sniff their way towards gratification. Russia wanted Constantinople and the Straits; France claimed Syria; Great Britain was beginning to feel the need of an overland route to the East, and of whatever else might be necessary to neutralise France's and Russia's gains; Italy had designs on Asia Minor, and the government of India turned hungry eyes towards Iraq.'

In line with these ambitions the Allied Powers in April and May 1916 reached a secret agreement (the Sykes-Picot Agreement) about the final disposition of Ottoman territory after the war. Russia was to have Constantinople, a strip of territory on each side of the Bosphorus, and the greater part of the four Turkish provinces near the Russian frontier. A British zone was to be recognised in Basra and Baghdad, and a French zone in Syria and Cilicia. Between them an independent Arab State or federation was to be established and divided into British and French spheres of influence. Palestine, because of its special religious character, was to be subjected to a special régime to be determined later by agreement between Russia, France and Great Britain. When word of this agreement leaked out Italy staked her claim for a share of the spoil, and was promised Adalia and Smyrna. Greece's

co-operation in the war was solicited by promises of territorial concessions on the coast of Asia Minor.

At the close of hostilities Great Britain desired a modification of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, but France, whose claims to a sphere of influence in Syria go back to the time of the Crusades, was adamant. In the meantime, however, an entirely new conception of international obligations towards conquered territory was forming in the minds of allied statesmen, largely on President Wilson's initiative. Henceforth there were to be no annexations against the wishes of the people concerned. The principle of national self-determination was to be applied wherever possible, and so the system of mandates was evolved, and in the words of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations: 'To territories which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and the development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation.'

But the evil genius of unconditioned power politics still lurked in the background. In 1919 Greek troops landed at Smyrna under the guns of the British, French and American fleets. By the abortive Treaty of Sèvres France and Italy were given spheres of influence in Asia Minor. In the allocation of the mandates and the determination of their boundaries, the general lines laid down in the Sykes-Picot Agreement were followed. French and American consent to the incorporation of the Mosul district into Iraq, and the recognition of the mandates in Palestine and Iraq, were purchased by the transfer to American and French companies of a proportion of the British interests in the Mosul Oil Fields.

The steady growth of Arab nationalism led to the termination of the mandatory régime in the Middle East, but the area still remains a centre of conflict between the rival interests of the Great Powers. France was ousted from Syria and the Lebanon, but continues to cling tenaciously to her holdings in the North African territories of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Between France and Spain a bone of contention has arisen over the deposition of the Sultan of Morocco

by France in August 1953. Russia, fearful of the vulnerability of her oil fields, pursues her traditional expansionist policy, and looks with longing towards the Persian Gulf and the Bosphorus. In 1940 Ribbentrop was informed that the area north of the Persian Gulf was the centre of Russia's territorial aspirations. Pressure is being put from time to time on Turkey for the restoration of the provinces which Russia returned to her at the close of the first world war, and for agreement to a modification of the Montreux Convention of 1936 governing the control of the Straits. Russia suggested that the Straits should be put under the control of the Black Sea powers, and their defence made the joint responsibility of Russia and Turkey. As a means of influencing the course of events in Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, Russia has strengthened the culturally autonomous republics whose frontiers march with these states and whose language is the same as theirs. Turkey, too, is apprehensive of the effects upon her own Kurdish citizens of any Russian advance into Iranian Kurdistan.

Great Britain, for her part, seeks to maintain her position in the Middle East by control of Cyprus and Aden, and by her treaties with Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf. Her aims continue as before —to keep open the trade routes to the Far East; to promote and protect British trade without excluding the legitimate trade of other powers; to foster friendly relations with the Arab States so that their co-operation in time of war will be assured; to guarantee the safety of the centres of oil production, and of the oil pipe lines across the desert; and, as a means to these ends, to ensure the political stability of the area. The importance of Arab friendship for Middle East defence was stressed in a British White Paper of 1947. Yet, by and large, the Arab peoples are not friendly towards Great Britain, and their governments are not stable. The passage of time witnesses an increase in the influence of the USA in all major decisions on strategic, political and economic issues in the Middle East.

The importance of the Middle East for world peace has increased rather than diminished with the passing of the years. Not only is it the land link between Europe, Asia and

Africa, through which run the routes via the Suez Canal and the Persian Gulf that connect the Mediterranean with the Indian Ocean, but it is also the point of intersection of many of the major international airlines, and the location of a large proportion of the world's oil supplies. The centre of gravity of world oil production has now definitely shifted from America to the Middle East, and it is estimated that from 42 per cent to 65 per cent of the world's proved oil reserves are to be found in the area. As the Soviet Union contains only 10 per cent of these reserves it cannot remain indifferent to the disposal of Middle East oil. In the event of war the control of the oil fields would be indispensable to the belligerents. At present the navies of both the USA and Great Britain depend upon Middle East supplies.

In spite of its importance the Middle East is often reckoned to be the weak spot in the defensive armour of the NATO Powers against possible Russian aggression. For this reason a high priority is given to the air bases established in North Africa, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and to Great Britain's hold on the Suez Canal base. To bolster up western defence the USA is prepared to pour millions of dollars into Greece, Turkey and Iran, and Great Britain to make generous contributions to the Jordan government for the maintenance of the Arab Legion.

In the face of Russian pressure Turkey has aligned herself with the Western Powers. She acquiesced in the loss of her Empire after the first World War, and, apart from the recovery of the Hatay (Alexandretta), has not pressed for any territorial readjustments. On the contrary, she has sought to strengthen her position by a series of treaties with neighbouring states—first with Greece, then by the Saadabad Pact of July 1937 with Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, and later, in April 1946, with Iraq, and in January 1947, with Transjordan. A treaty with Pakistan is now being negotiated. Her desire for treaties with Egypt and Syria was only baulked by the tension existing at the time between these countries and the Hashemite States of Iraq and Transjordan.

Iran also inclines to the western democracies. She cannot however forget the virtual partition she suffered in 1907 at

the hands of Russia and Great Britain, and the veiled protectorate imposed by Great Britain after the first world war. Hostility to Great Britain was manifested in the nationalisation of the oil industry in 1951, and the dispute over the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's installations at Abadan. But her fear of Russia predominates. Though Russia's plan to set up an independent State of Azerbaijan in February 1946 was ultimately frustrated, Iran is still apprehensive of Russian aggression from without, and of insidious Russian propaganda through the Tudeh Party from within.

Both Turkey and Iran have found the cost of maintaining an efficient army a severe strain upon their resources. On the 12th July 1947 an agreement was reached between the USA and Turkey whereby the former undertook to furnish financial assistance in order 'to enable Turkey to strengthen the security forces which Turkey requires for protection of her freedom and independence and, at the same time, to continue to maintain the stability of her economy.' That this plan had Russian aggression in mind was made clear in the statement of USA policy. Its aim was 'to ensure the peaceful development of nations, their free institutions and national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose on them totalitarian régimes which undermine the foundations of peace, and hence the security of the USA.' In the same programme Iran, too, received substantial grants.

But the buttressing of the economy of Greece, Turkey and Iran is not a sufficient safeguard. Two other lines of approach to the defence of the Middle East have been pursued by the Western Powers. The first is the establishment of a Middle East Defence Pact with the Arab States: the second is to strengthen the outer line of defence by securing Pakistan's accession to it. In the event of war the Middle East countries would assume special importance as a base of operations and a source of supply. But the Arab States refuse absolutely to be drawn into any agreement of this kind. Greater than their fear of Russia is their fear of Zionism. Their distrust of the policy of the Western Powers is deep-rooted. Their avowed intention is to pursue a policy of 'neutralism' in the struggle between the powers, and Egypt, because of her hostility to

Great Britain on the Suez Canal issue, threatens even closer co-operation with Russia. The Arabs claim that any scheme of Middle East defence must be constructed around the collective security pact of the Arab League.

Western readers may not find it easy to understand the underlying motives for Arab intransigence and occasional xenophobia. That the Middle East has owed a great debt in the past to the Western Powers would be acknowledged by the Arabs themselves. The contributions of Great Britain, the USA and France in the fields of political, economic, social, and cultural development, will be considered in detail later. It is recognised that Great Britain brought peace in the Persian Gulf area by suppressing piracy and arms smuggling, and has lent her support to the evolution of Arab nationalism in so far as this did not conflict with her own vital interests. Her contribution to the development of sound administration in Arab lands is appreciated, but the general impression in the minds of the Arab States is that the Great Powers view Middle East issues primarily in terms of their own particular interests, and that considerations of strategy, which at the present time mean defensive measures against possible Russian aggression, predominate over all other factors. In pursuance of their several policies the Western Powers have, in Arab eyes, broken their pledged word and sacrificed justice and fair dealing. Any assistance the Western Powers now offer—be it economic or cultural—is suspect. A shrewd observer, Dr. Ralph Bunche, has recently summed up the situation in these words: 'The Near East is supersensitive to the attachment of political strings to economic aid. Rightly or wrongly people believe that economic aid is primarily a means for political appeasement, that is, for making certain sections of the Near East forget their political rights and claims.' Much that appears to be xenophobia is in reality the natural reaction to policies held to be unjust.

Yet whatever course Great Britain takes is liable to lead to criticism. If she intervenes in an Arab country on the basis of her treaty rights, she is attacked for her intervention: if she does not intervene, on the grounds that the Arab States are now independent, she is blamed for failure to aid them. She

is disliked for three reasons—because she is a foreign power, because of her strength, and because her interests clash at certain points with those of the Middle East States. The more the Arab States advance in self-government and prosperity, the more they jib at dependence upon foreign control. Hence the insistence of Egypt on the evacuation of the Suez Canal area; hence the demands of Jordan and Iraq for a modification of their treaties with Great Britain. Our next step, therefore, must be to try to understand the nature and intensity of Arab nationalism.

MIDDLE EAST NATIONALISMS

For four hundred years prior to the first world war the Arabs had been subjected to Turkish domination. During the nineteenth century a movement for Arab renaissance, stimulated by the democratic spirit of American education, had been initiated in Beirut, and had spread to other parts of the Arab world. Beginning as a cultural movement, it soon acquired a political tinge. It was in part a protest against Turkish mis-rule and corruption, and in part a nationalist movement. Its aims were variously expressed as a bi-national state inside the Ottoman Empire with local Arab autonomy, on the pattern of the Austria-Hungary Empire or as complete Arab independence. The secret or open societies which sponsored these aims had their branches in Syria, Iraq and Egypt, but the movement was never fully co-ordinated. Great faith was placed for a short while in the victory of the young Turk party over the Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1908, but the Committee of Union and Progress soon proved to be as unsympathetic towards Arab claims as the Sultan himself.

Turkey's entry into the first world war gave the Arabs their chance. Over Arabia Turkey's hold was precarious, and it was from this region, through the family of the Sherif Hussein of the Hejaz, that the Arab revolt began. The Arabs of Syria (which comprised also the Lebanon and Palestine) and Iraq, were too strictly controlled by Turkish forces to allow of their taking the initiative, though, as the revolt progressed, they gave it their whole-hearted support. The Arabs sought

assurance from the Allies that the reward for the risks they were taking would be independence. One of the most important secret societies, El Fatat, signified its intention of supporting Turkey if there were any sign of European penetration of Arab countries.

The McMahon correspondence of 1915–16 between Great Britain and the Sherif Hussein led the Arabs to believe that, in the event of Turkey's defeat, the independence of the Arab States would be recognised by Great Britain within the territories 'in which Great Britain is free to act without detriment to the interests of her ally, France', and according to 'the limits and boundaries proposed by the Sherif of Mecca.' Great Britain's special interests in the vilayets of Basra and Baghdad were recognised. When the Sherif Hussein learnt of the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 he was assured by Commander Hogarth in January 1918, in the name of the British Government, that 'the economic and political freedom of the Arab population' in Palestine would be safeguarded. A Declaration made in Cairo in June 1918 to seven Arab leaders promised freedom to the Arabs of Arabia and of Arab territory generally. In November 1918 a joint Anglo-French Military Declaration stated that it was the aim of the two powers to establish in Syria and Iraq national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the indigenous populations.

Any doubts that the Arabs may have had during the war about Allied intentions were removed by President Wilson's assurance that the post-war settlement was to be based upon 'the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.' One of the famous fourteen points stated that 'Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured undoubted security of life, and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.'

Arab disappointment was bitter when, at the close of the war, the Arab States were denied full independence, and instead, were placed under a mandatory régime. They felt that the definite promises made to them had been broken, and that the principles for which the Allies claimed they had fought the war had been violated. Objection was taken to Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations which declared that 'certain communities, formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire, have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised, subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory until such times as they are able to stand alone.' An Arab Congress held in Syria claimed that 'the Arab inhabitants of Syria are no less fitted or gifted than were certain other nations (such as the Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks and Rumanians) when granted independence', and it was noted that the only Arab countries whose complete independence was recognised by the Allies were the less progressive States of Arabia. Article 22 also stated that 'the wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the mandatory.' Actually the wishes of these countries were overruled by the interests of Great Britain and France. The Arabs also deeply resented the violation of the principle of Arab unity. They saw their lands divided into a number of fragmentary political units.

Several reasons have been adduced for the discrepancies between the various undertakings given by Great Britain during the first world war. The multiplicity of British governmental departments responsible for Middle East affairs, and the exigencies of war-time, have been blamed for the confusion. The fault has been said to lie in the careless drafting of some of the documents, especially the McMahon correspondence, or in the failure of the Arabs to understand the full significance of certain references in these documents to foreign assistance in the development of their countries. Explanations have been put forward why it was not possible to establish in 1919 a single Arab state, e.g. that the elements involved were so diverse and unrelated, and the distances

between one region and another so great, or that there was a complete lack of the necessary material resources and administrative experience, or that the centrifugal tendencies were too strong. The plea has been made that it was in the best interests of the Arab masses that, for a period, their countries should be under British or French mandates, which have been described as 'Imperialism in reverse.' Much has been written about the material and administrative benefits which the Arab countries derived from British control. The fact remains that there were discrepancies in the documents, that the Arabs were misled, and that in the choice between self-government and efficient government—if such a choice must be made—they preferred self-government. Arab confidence in the integrity of the policy of Great Britain and France in the Middle East has never fully recovered from the shock of the post-war settlement.

The political wisdom of that settlement is open to question. The King-Crane Commission sent by President Wilson in 1919 to study the situation on the spot, gave as its opinion that 'The territory concerned is too limited, the population too small, and the economic, geographic, racial and language unity too manifest, to make the setting up of independent states within its boundaries desirable, if such division can possibly be avoided. The country is very largely Arab in language, culture, tradition and customs.' The boundaries of the mandatory régimes, as ultimately defined, paid far too little attention to strategic considerations, or economic needs. Two of the states as set up after the war have proved notoriously unstable—the Lebanon and Iraq. By extending the boundaries of the Lebanese Republic to include areas almost entirely Muslim, the French introduced so precarious a balance between the different communities within the country that cohesion is difficult to achieve. In Iraq, in addition to the split between the Sunni and the Shi'is, there is the problem of the Kurdish and Assyrian minorities, and the chasms between town and country, peasant and land-owner, one tribe and another, the older and the younger generations, the north and the south. One writer has even described Iraq as 'only a conglomeration of ethnic, religious and linguistic

minorities,' but this description underestimates the degree of administrative unity already achieved.

Passive resistance, strikes and revolts, marked the history of Syria, the Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt from the year 1920 onwards. The Arabs would probably not have objected to the technical aid and advice of Great Britain, or preferably of the USA, but they resented the sense of inferiority which the mandatory system implied. In view of what they believed to be their intrinsic right to self-determination, they considered the division of their territory by the League of Nations as *ultra vires*. They resented above all the sectarian divisiveness of French policy in Syria and the Lebanon, which stemmed, they believed, from French opposition to the Arab nationalist movement because of fear of its possible repercussions on the French position in North Africa.

One aim has dominated Arab policy since 1920—the securing of independence as speedily as possible. As the intensity of Arab nationalism was forced upon the consciousness of the British authorities by the continued hostility of the Arab leaders, Great Britain began to facilitate the process of self-government. Egypt, whose nationalism marched parallel with that of the other Arab States, but along slightly different lines, was, subject to four reserved points, recognised as an independent state in 1922. Complete independence was achieved fourteen years later. Iraq's sovereign independence was acknowledged by a series of treaties in 1923, 1926 and 1930, and in 1932 she was admitted to membership of the League of Nations. The independent status of Transjordan was progressively recognised in a series of treaties and agreements from 1922 to 1946. The independence of Syria and the Lebanon was declared in 1941, though technically the mandates did not terminate until the entry of these countries into the United Nations in 1945.

Today those Arab States which are bound by treaty to Great Britain are insisting on some modification in their favour. In addition, the independence of all Arab peoples (in particular those of Palestine and North Africa) is demanded. The protocol of the Alexandria Conference of Arab States in 1944 claimed the independence of Palestine in these words:

'Palestine's international existence and independence cannot, *de jure*, be questioned any more than can the independence of any Arab country.' The unity of the whole Arab world is voiced in another sentence of the same document: 'The Committee thinks that Palestine constitutes an important element in the structure of the Arab nations, and that the rights of the Arabs cannot be touched without the peace and stability of the Arab world being affected.' In the debates at the United Nations the Arab States have urged the independence of Libya, and the autonomy of Tunisia and Morocco. Egypt, in like manner, has demanded the independence of the Sudan from British Control, though insisting on the closest possible link between herself and the Sudan.

For another reason the settlement laid down after the first world war is open to criticism. Other nationalisms, besides that of the Arabs, met with frustration. Three other groups, on the strength of their support for the Allied cause, hoped for autonomy or independence, and the hopes of all three were doomed to disappointment. They were the Kurds, the Assyrians and the Armenians. The possibility of a Kurdish State was envisaged in the Treaty of Sèvres of May 1920, which provided for local autonomy for the Kurds left in Turkey, or, if they themselves preferred it, an independent state to include the Kurds of the Mosul vilayet. This treaty was, however, replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 which said nothing about Kurdish independence or autonomy. One reason for the failure of Kurdish nationalism is that Kurdish tribalism is stronger than the sense of national unity. At the present time the Kurds are divided between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and the USSR. Soviet policy in the Middle East has encouraged movements for local autonomy, and the Kurds look favourably towards the USSR because of Kurdish autonomy in the Caucasus. An independent Kurdish Republic was established for a brief period in December 1945 at Mahabad in Iran, but both the Turkish and the Iranian Governments are strongly opposed to Kurdish separatism. In Iraq Kurdish nationalism has strong support, and in the Middle East generally it constitutes a live issue.

At the end of the first world war Armenia was divided

between Turkey and the USSR. A short-lived Armenian Republic was set up, but was soon incorporated in the USSR. The Allies could have established the Armenians in Cilicia, and in fact the French encouraged 100,000 Armenians to settle there. When, however, the French evacuated the country the Armenians were obliged to flee to Arab lands for safety. The terrible Turkish massacres of 1915 onwards—a grim reaction on the part of the Turkish authorities to the Armenian Nationalist Movement—compelled the flight of thousands of Armenians to Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. In recent years substantial numbers have trekked to Soviet Armenia at the instigation of the Soviet authorities, and with the blessing of many of the leaders of the Armenian Church.

It would have been possible to settle the Assyrians in the Hakkiari area after the war. Failing to secure autonomy they remained in Iraq relying on British protection. Tension between them and the Iraqi authorities continued to mount until the outburst and tragic massacre of 1933. At present the Assyrians are scattered over Iraq, Syria and Turkey, and constitute one of the many dissatisfied minority groups in the Middle East.

Whatever Great Britain or the Western Powers may say about friendship for the Arabs, the latter are convinced that the former's policy is actuated primarily by 'imperialistic' motives, and dominated by the 'colonial' spirit. This accounts for the neutral attitude adopted by most Arab peoples throughout the second world war. They felt they had little to hope for from the victory of either side, and they were not prepared to put their trust in any more Allied promises. The terms of their treaties with Great Britain were faithfully fulfilled, but their support lacked enthusiasm. Arab suspicion and hostility do not stem exclusively from resentment at the settlement which followed the first world war, but were also, in no small measure, due to the policy pursued by the Western Powers on the Palestine issue. To grasp the significance and repercussions of the Palestine problem on Middle East affairs we must now turn our attention to the subject of Jewish nationalism and the growth of the Zionist Movement.

II

Conflicting Nationalisms

For centuries, in both Christian and Muslim countries, Jews, for reasons partly religious and partly economic, have been subjected to discrimination and persecution. The same forces which in the nineteenth century created the Arab renaissance in the Middle East gave rise also to a movement for a Jewish renaissance in Europe. Its aim was not merely relief from the physical limitations of ghetto life, but release from its psychological restrictions. This movement for emancipation and enlightenment, which received its first impulses from the ideas spread by the French Revolution, gave hope to many Jews of assimilation into the country of their residence. Many identified themselves with the culture of France or Germany, and some joined the Christian Church. Soon, however, persecution and pogroms in Eastern Europe, and the dissemination of 'anti-Semitism' in the more liberal countries of Western Europe—an attitude the more objectionable because it was founded on race prejudice—convinced many that the only prospect of escape was by emigration. Between the years 1880 and 1914 about three million Jews fled from Eastern Europe, the majority of them to the USA.

Meanwhile, another idea was maturing in Jewry. The belief in the divine promise of an eventual return to Palestine associated with the coming of the Messiah which was to usher in an era of universal peace, and the acceptance of the one God by all mankind, had helped to sustain the Jews of the Diaspora during centuries of persecution. Now Jews began to consider the practical possibility of a country of their own, where they could develop their own culture and pursue their religious practices unimpeded by external restrictions. Judaism, being like Islam a religion which prescribes a total

way of life for the whole community, presupposes an organised society in which its laws are obeyed. Many pious Jews, however, held that it would be a sin to try to expedite the Messianic fulfilment by political means. Hundreds of them (the Challakuh) made their way to Palestine so that they might continue their studies and die there. Others, mainly small farmers from Russia and Rumania, with the help of benefactors like Sir Moses Montefiore and Baron Edmond de Rothschild, settled in Palestine in agricultural colonies which established good relations with the Arabs of the country. But the nationalist ideal continued to gain ground. In 1882 an organisation called 'Bilu' was formed in Constantinople, with the purpose of establishing in Palestine an autonomous Jewish State within the Turkish Empire. Its name stood for the initials of Hebrew words meaning 'House of Jacob, come let us go.'

Interest in the return of the Jews to Palestine had long captured the imagination of Christians in England. In a despatch to Lord Ponsonby, then the British Ambassador to the Porte, Lord Palmerston had written on the 11th August 1840: 'There exists at present among the Jews dispersed over Europe a strong notion that the time is approaching when their nation is to return to Palestine, and, consequently, their wish to go thither has become more keen, and their thoughts have been bent more intensely than before upon the means of realising their wish.' Even before the end of the seventeenth century at least twelve publications had appeared in England advocating the return of the Jews to Palestine, mainly on religious grounds. In the minds of many British Christians this return was looked on as a fulfilment of prophecy, and linked with the Second Coming of Christ. Many anticipated a simultaneous conversion of the Jews to Christianity. During the nineteenth century humanitarian motives strengthened religious conviction. In 1854 Lord Shaftesbury wrote in his diary: 'There is a country without a nation, and God now, in His wisdom and mercy, directs us to a nation without a country.'

The idea of a Jewish State crystallised in the fertile mind of Theodor Herzl, a Viennese journalist, who was deeply moved

by the Dreyfus affair in France—the country of enlightenment par excellence. His pamphlet *The Jewish State* was not, however, so epoch-making as his organisation of the first Zionist Congress at Basle in 1897. Here for the first time the Jews of the world had an instrument for expressing their national aspirations. At the Basle Congress it was stated that: 'The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a Home in Palestine secured by public law.' The word 'Home' was chosen in preference to 'A Jewish State' so as not to antagonise the Turkish Sultan. In Herzl's opinion, however, nothing less than a state of their own would solve the Jewish problem. He believed that the settlement of Jews in countries, where they formed an unassimilated bloc, would mean that they would merely carry 'anti-Semitism' with them in their knapsacks. A Jewish State would, he hoped, relieve the pressure of Jews upon the countries where they now resided. It would enable them to escape from their minority status and the oppressive sense of being separate and different from other people in religion and race.

Opposition from the Turkish authorities to Jewish autonomy in Palestine turned the minds of the early Zionists to the possibility of settlement in other regions. The British government suggested the El Arish area, between Egypt and Palestine, or that part of East Africa which is now Kenya. Herzl favoured the latter as a possible stepping-stone to Palestine, but the Zionist Congress of 1903 flatly rejected the proposal. In the words of the Peel Commission of 1936 they believed that 'Almighty God had concluded an indissoluble covenant between the people of Israel and the Holy Land.' In the 1930's the Soviet government devised the plan of a Jewish State in Biro-Bijan, and of a Jewish settlement in the Crimea, but both met with scant success. Large-scale Jewish immigration into Argentine was achieved through the generosity of the German Jewish millionaire, Baron Hirsch, and, at the height of the Nazi persecutions, the British government offered an autonomous Jewish settlement in British Guiana. No other project has, however, taken the place of Palestine at any time in Jewish thought.

Amongst the Zionists themselves there was some difference

of opinion about the procedure to be followed for the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish National Home. Until 1911 the main emphasis was placed, especially by Jews of Western Europe, on 'Political Zionism', i.e. the securing of a charter similar to the documents which had proved so helpful to the Jews in the past in saving them from persecution. The help of the governments of Turkey, France and Germany, as well as of Great Britain, was sought at one time or another in the quest for a charter. After the Zionist Congress of 1911 'Palestinian Zionism' came to the fore with the support of the Jews of Eastern Europe, i.e. the belief that it was only by organic growth, by a steady build-up through immigration and land purchase, that the hope of Jewish settlement in Palestine could be transformed into a reality.

Early in the first world war the Zionists prepared a document entitled 'Outline of Programme for the Jewish resettlement of Palestine in accordance with the aspirations of the Zionist Movement.' It began with the claim that 'the Jewish population of Palestine (which in the programme shall be taken to mean both present and future) shall be officially recognised by the Suzerain government as the Jewish nation, and shall enjoy in that country full civic, national and political rights.' To the British government Dr. Chaim Weizmann suggested that Palestine should be recognised as 'the National Home of the Jewish People.' All the evidence points to the hope of the Zionist leaders at this time that Great Britain would sponsor the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, though the President of the Zionist Congress in 1911 had stated that 'only those suffering from gross ignorance or actuated by malice could accuse us of the desire of establishing an independent Jewish Kingdom . . . the aim of Zionism is the erection for the Jewish people of a publicly recognised legally secured Home in Palestine.' When the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November 1917 brought the promise of British support for the Jewish cause its wording fell considerably short of Zionist anticipations. It read: 'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this

object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.' The reason for the phraseology, in itself notoriously ambiguous, was the strong opposition of the Jewish Conjoint Committee in England to the Zionist programme, and a division of opinion within the British Cabinet.

The ambiguities of wording of the Balfour Declaration were underlined in blood as opposition to it from the Arab side developed. Both Mr. Balfour and Mr. Lloyd George explained later that the immediate establishment of a Jewish State was not contemplated, and the latter gave as his interpretation that, if the Jews took full advantage of the opportunity afforded them by the idea of a National Home and became a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would become a Jewish Commonwealth. Jewish witnesses before the Peel Commission claimed that the Balfour Declaration had envisaged the eventual creation of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine and Transjordan, and the Commission itself reached the conclusion that the words 'the establishment of a National Home' were the outcome of a compromise between those ministers of the British Cabinet who contemplated the ultimate establishment of a Jewish State and those who did not.

The British authorities were probably content to leave the phraseology of the Balfour Declaration vague, and to commit to the future the responsibility for determining its precise meaning and implications. But it may well be contended that a 'National Home' in the full sense of the words carry with them the logical implication of political independence. A 'guaranteed minority-status' for the Jews in Palestine would have meant, as Dr. Weizmann pointed out, nothing but 'a ghetto in an Arab State.'

A wide variety of reasons has been suggested for Great Britain's undertaking to support the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. Genuine sympathy for the Jews played its part. A desire to secure the backing of world Jewry at a time when the war was not going too well, and a wish to

reward Dr. Weizmann for the signal services he had rendered the Allied cause, also carried weight. But regard for Great Britain's special interests in the Middle East also influenced her policy. Anxiety to secure the eastern flank of the Suez Canal, and fear lest any other power—be it France or one of the Central Powers—might sponsor the scheme, turned the minds of British statesmen in the same direction. Sir Leopold Amery drew attention to the importance of Palestine in Great Britain's imperial policy. Dr. Weizmann has recorded the fact that 'Italians look on Zionism as a cloak for the creation of a British Imperial outpost in the Levant.'

The Zionists were strongly opposed to the internationalisation of Palestine as envisaged in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, nor did they want a British-French Condominium. Dr. Weizmann was convinced that Great Britain was the one power to whose keeping the Jewish National Home could be safely entrusted. Both the American-Jewish Congress in 1918, and the Zionist Organisation in 1919, urged the selection of Great Britain as the mandatory. In the end the mandate for Palestine was allocated to Great Britain, partly at least because of the Balfour Declaration. France was none too pleased. She maintained that Palestine really fell within her sphere of influence in Syria, and the Roman Catholic communities in Palestine disliked a Protestant mandatory power.

The Balfour Declaration was incorporated in the text of the mandate. The Jewish hope was that the mandate would give open recognition to 'the historic rights of the Jews to Palestine.' Instead it recognised only 'the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine, and the grounds for reconstituting their National Home in that country.' Three objectives were imposed on the mandatory. Article 2 reads: 'The mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home as laid down in the Preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.' Great Britain certainly used every endeavour to discharge this threefold responsibility, and at first

believed that her obligations to the Jews and the Arabs respectively were not incompatible. Reconciliation, however, between these obligations could only be effected on the basis of the willingness of both parties to co-operate, and it was to the achievement of co-operation that British policy was directed. Persistent Arab opposition to the National Home eventually undermined the foundations of the whole policy.

The conclusion must not, however, be drawn that the Arabs lacked sympathy for the Jews in their plight in Europe. The generally unsatisfactory treatment of non-Muslim peoples in most Islamic countries forms the subject of a later section in this book (pages 109–119), but the Jews as a people were never singled out for special disabilities. When the Jews were expelled from Spain and Portugal in 1492 they were accorded a welcome in Muslim lands. The Sherif Hussein, in conversation with Commander Hogarth in January 1918, expressed his willingness to help the persecuted Jews, saying that he welcomed them to all Arab lands. Under certain conditions the Emir Feisal, his son, was prepared to implement an agreement reached with Dr. Weizmann on the 3rd January 1919 for the settlement of Jews in Palestine. Part of the preamble of this document is worth quoting as illustrating the relations between these leaders of the two communities: 'Mindful of the racial kinship and ancient bonds existing between the Arabs and the Jewish people, and realising that the surest means of working out the consummation of their national aspirations is through the closest possible collaboration in the development of the Arab State and Palestine . . . [we] have agreed, etc.' The more the pity that the conditions specified were never fulfilled and the agreement lapsed. A Syrian Committee formed in Paris at the time of the Peace Conference stated that: 'All those among them [the Jews] who are oppressed in certain retrograde countries are welcome. Let them settle in Palestine, but in an autonomous Palestine connected with Syria by the sole bond of federation.'

At the Paris Conference of 1919 the Emir Feisal had admitted that Palestine stood in a unique position. In a memorandum presented to the Conference he wrote: 'The Arabs

cannot risk assuming the responsibility of holding level the scales in the clash of races and religions that have in this one province so often involved the world in difficulties. They would wish for the effective super-position of a great trustee so long as a representative local administration commended itself by actively promoting the material prosperity of the country.' But this was not typical of the Arab attitude which claimed that Palestine fell within the area reserved for the Arabs in the McMahon correspondence. This was officially denied by the British government. The Arabs objected to a mandate on principle, but in any case preferred the USA to Great Britain as the mandatory power. Their contention was that Great Britain had no right to dispose of Palestine solely because she had been instrumental in freeing it from the Turks. At the 1939 Conference the Lord Chancellor admitted that in 1918 Great Britain had not been free to dispose of Palestine 'without regard for the wishes and interests of the inhabitants.'

Arab opposition to the mandate and to the Jewish National Home increased rather than diminished as year followed year. The reason was not at all that the Arabs were worse off under the mandate than before. On the contrary, in many respects their material condition showed marked improvement. The general standards of health were raised; infant mortality declined; malaria and trachoma were virtually eliminated, and the population between 1920 and 1947 grew from 600,000 to more than 1,200,000. Arab agriculture flourished, more land was brought under cultivation and the yield per acre increased, pests were destroyed, and mechanised methods of farming introduced. The land tax was reduced and the Ottoman system of farming taxes abolished. Jewish citriculture, industry, building, and general development gave profitable employment to Arab labour. The Arabs benefited from the Jewish welfare services, and from their superior scientific knowledge. There was a general rise in the standard of living. The British established a local well-trained Civil Service. More, perhaps, might have been done, as the Peel Commission suggested, in the field of education, but in point of fact illiteracy diminished year by year, and

82 per cent of the money spent on education was devoted tc Arab schools.

In the minds of the Palestine Arabs these benefits were only of secondary importance. The fundamental reason for their objection to the mandate was their perfectly understandable desire for independence, and the fear that the Jewish National Home would deprive them of it. The ever-increasing pressure of Jewish immigration and land purchases gave grounds for apprehension, and the knowledge that neighbouring Arab States were step by step attaining their independence merely added to their dissatisfaction and unrest. More and more their distrust of Zionist propaganda and of British intentions increased. The mandate, in their eyes, was 'merely a cynical device for promoting British "imperialism" under the mask of humane consideration for the Jews.'

On the whole the Jews did little to quieten Arab fears. It would seem that in the early days the Arab point of view was hardly considered at all. Palestine was looked upon as a country almost without inhabitants. Some Jews fondly imagined that the Arabs would welcome them because of the material benefits they brought with them. Individual Arabs were often considered as backward and inferior. Certain aspects of the Jewish economy excluded Arab participation. The struggle between Jews and Arabs was regarded as a contest between progress and reaction. As one Jew of independent judgment has pointed out: 'Had they [the immigrants] shown a little more discretion and less self-righteousness, more adaptability and a broader interpretation of their pioneer mission—the effort, even if rejected, even if ultimately hopeless, would have made a great difference, particularly for the later internal development of the State of Israel.' Dr. Weizmann even at one time expressed the hope that Palestine would ultimately become as Jewish as England is English.

Not all Jews, however, failed to realise the supreme importance of good relations. The Zionist Conference of 1921 passed a resolution expressing 'the determination of the Jewish people to live with the Arab people on terms of unity and mutual respect, and together with them to make the

common home into a flourishing community, the upbuilding of which may assure to each of its peoples an undisturbed national development.' There were groups of Jews in Palestine, such as the Covenant of Peace (Brit Shalom), the Unity Party (Ihud), led by Dr. Judah Magnes, first Chancellor of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Left Wing Socialist Party (Hashomer Hatzair), and some of the later immigrants (Aliyah Hadashah) who strove hard for an understanding with the Arabs. Co-operation was occasionally secured on government committees and municipal corporations. Dr. Weizmann once said: 'I hold the ultimate identity of Arab and Jewish interests to be a fundamental reality.'

It is a common belief that the mandatory might have done more to promote goodwill between the two parties. Certainly inability to secure Arab co-operation doomed the policy of the mandate to failure. Gradually the irreconcilability of the three objectives of the mandate was impressed on the British authorities. The Shaw Commission, which visited Palestine in 1929, reported that: 'A National Home for the Jews, in the sense in which it was widely understood, was inconsistent with the demands of Arab nationalists, while the claims of Arab nationalism, if admitted, would have rendered impossible the fulfilment of the pledge to the Jews.' The Peel Commission in 1936 described the disturbances in Palestine as 'the outcome of a conflict between Arab and Jewish nationalism.' In the opinion of the Commission 'it is fundamentally a conflict of right with right.' This conflict has been tersely described as one between 'a nationalism which was being satisfied under powerful protection, and a nationalism in process of frustration.' The complexity of the situation was accentuated by the fact that nowhere in the world was nationalism more intense in the period between the two wars than in the Middle East, and nowhere was it more deeply seated than in Palestine.

All efforts on the part of the British authorities to reconcile the claims of the two sides met with a rebuff. The Arabs urged that the question of the legality of the mandate be referred to the International Court of Justice. Receiving no redress they resorted to violence. The Jews maintained—and on this

point they later received the support of the Peel Commission —that the primary purpose of the mandate was the establishment of the Jewish National Home, and that all other objectives must be subordinated to this one. In their opinion there was nothing wrong with the mandate itself, but only with the way it was interpreted and implemented by the Palestine administration. To promote the establishment of the National Home they connived at illegal immigration, fictitious marriages, and the opening of mushroom banks. The British government, with wearisome regularity, sent Commission after Commission to Palestine to study the situation on the spot, and to make recommendations. It tried in 1922, 1930, 1936, and again in 1939, so to re-interpret the mandate as to make it workable. British policy vacillated first in the one direction and then in the other. When in 1939 the British government finally adopted an interpretation which the majority of the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission considered to be incompatible with the text of the mandate, the Jews in turn had recourse to violence. So often had British policy faltered that by this time both sides shared the same conviction that nothing but the use of force could induce the British Government to change its mind.

In 1918 Commander Hogarth had brought the Sherif Hussein a message from the British government that 'so far as Palestine is concerned we are determined that no people shall be subjected to another.' Every conceivable solution to the Palestine problem which would ensure the fulfilment of this undertaking was given consideration, including the establishment of a unitary government, a bi-national state, a cantonisation scheme, and a partition of the country into separate states. Every plan proposed, however, proved unacceptable to the one side or the other, if not to both. Great Britain's hands were finally forced by the Nazi policy of persecuting and exterminating the Jews in the territory under Nazi control at a time when other countries had virtually closed their doors to large-scale Jewish immigration. Mounting pressure was put on Great Britain by the USA to admit more Jews into Palestine in contravention of the terms

of the 1939 White Paper. By this time Zionist leadership had passed from Great Britain to the USA, and was exercising considerable influence with the President and his advisers. A Zionist Conference held in the Hotel Biltmore, New York City, in 1942, had demanded that Palestine should be a Jewish Commonwealth and unlimited Jewish immigration allowed under the control of the Jewish agency. Great Britain, herself dependent upon American support in the second world war, could not ignore American representations, but felt that the intervention of the USA in Palestine affairs should be matched by American willingness to share responsibility for the execution of policy.

the only solution to their problem lay in the establishment of a Jewish State. This is brought out clearly in the wording of the Proclamation of the Independence of Israel issued on the 14th May 1948, which reads: 'The recent holocaust which engulfed millions of Jews in Europe, proved anew the need to solve the problem of the homelessness and lack of independence of the Jewish people, by means of the re-establishment of the Jewish State which would open the gates to all Jews, and endow the Jewish people with equality of status among the family of nations.' The suggestion put forward at the close of the second world war that the Jews in Europe should help in rebuilding the countries of which they were formerly citizens, revealed a total lack of comprehension of the realities of the situation.

In the end, the British government reached the inevitable conclusion that the mandate was unworkable, and in February 1947 announced its decision to relinquish it. The United Nations General Assembly, after studying the report of a Commission specially appointed to examine the situation, decided, but not without much wavering, on a scheme of partition on the 29th November 1947. An Arab proposal to accept a plan of cantonisation in Palestine in lieu of partition was submitted too late. Great Britain made it known that she would surrender the mandate at midnight on the 14th May 1948. Few Palestine Arabs believed at the time that this was Great Britain's real intention. The ignominious manner of her ultimate withdrawal, and the state of

chaos and anarchy in which she left the country, struck a grievous blow at her prestige in the Middle East.

The Jews in particular welcomed partition, though their hopes had at one time been set on the inclusion of the whole of Palestine and Transjordan within the boundaries of the Jewish State. In the eyes of the Arabs of Palestine, and of the neighbouring Arab States, partition was as illegal and unjust as the Balfour Declaration or the mandate. By this date the Arab States of the Middle East were taking an active interest, despite Jewish protests, in the Palestine problem. During the disturbances of 1936 onwards, the rulers of Transjordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen, had, with Great Britain's approval, intervened as a modifying influence. An Arab Congress held in Bludan in August 1937 had upheld the principle that 'Palestine is an important part of the Arab homeland.' The representatives of Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, were invited by Great Britain to the Conference to be held in London in February 1939. Later on the Arab League and the All-India Muslim League promised their support to the Arabs of Palestine. As soon as the decision on partition was known, the Prime Ministers of the seven Arab States—Syria, the Lebanon, Iraq, Transjordan, Egypt, Saudi-Arabia and the Yemen—met in Cairo from December 12th–17th, 1947, and issued an official statement that they would support the Palestine Arabs with arms, money and troops, and that their armies would march against the Jews as soon as the mandate ended.

Thus the clash between Arab nationalism and Jewish nationalism had reached a complete deadlock. The problem was complicated by the fact that each side had international support. All Arab peoples, all Muslim communities in all parts of the world were deeply concerned about the status of the Arabs in Palestine. All Jewry was involved in the question of Jewish settlement in Palestine. The story of events in the Middle East during the past two decades reveals the lengths to which a spirit of uncompromising nationalism was prepared to go. Both Iran and Egypt have foregone substantial economic advantages rather than surrender one iota of their nationalist claims. Overwhelmed by the Zionist menace, and

still brooding over the 1920 settlement, the Arab States are purblind to the threat of aggression from Russia. They have persistently refused to accept a compromise solution of the Palestine question, and Jewish nationalism, for its part, has shown reluctance to make any substantial concessions. Middle East nationalisms have reached their peak of intensity at a time when the rest of the world is being driven by the hard facts of life to consciousness of its interdependence. For this grim situation in the Middle East the western world is in no small measure responsible. The Western Powers failed at first to understand the strength of Middle East nationalisms, or to guide them into constructive channels. Preoccupation with their own particular interests blinded them to the part that sentiment plays in Middle East affairs. They claimed that their approach was 'realistic' and minimised the importance of the power of sentiment and of ethical factors in this tangled situation. The only result has been to generate in the Middle East, and especially amongst the Arabs, an attitude of mind which is anything but realistic, and to spread the conviction that moral claims carry little weight in western policy. Until due recognition is given to the part played by sentiment in human affairs and a solution sought which accords with ethical principles, little progress towards a lasting settlement in this area may be anticipated.

III

Arab Disunity, Jewish Intransigence and the Palestine Refugees

In the fighting which broke out the moment the Partition Scheme was announced, and which continued intermittently through 1948, the Arabs, despite their potentially superior numbers, suffered a series of major set-backs. One reason for this unexpected result was that, whereas the Jews were struggling for their very existence, many of the Arab troops had little stomach for the fight. Attempts to whip up Muslim feeling by declaring a Jihad (Holy War) met with scant response. The true cause of the Arab débacle went deeper. As a distinguished Arab writer, Mr. Musa Alami, has explained in his book *The Lesson of Palestine*, whereas the Jews conducted the war with a co-ordinated organisation, a unified command and total conscription, the Arabs revealed only disunity, no single command, diversity of plans, improvisation and, above all, a slackness and lack of seriousness about winning the war. When, in the autumn of 1948, the Egyptian forces were hard pressed in the Negev, the armies of Iraq and Jordan could easily have relieved the situation by pushing an attack in the central area. Instead they remained inactive. The armies, for their part, transferred the blame for their failure to the politicians who had declared war without making adequate preparations, or co-ordinating a plan of campaign. At a later date an accusation was brought against King Farouk of Egypt, and his courtiers, of pocketing huge profits from the purchase of defective armaments.

How then came it about that Arab nationalism, which had shown itself so recalcitrant in its demands for Arab unity from the Western Powers after the first world war, failed so miserably to reveal any symbol of unity when put to the test

in the Palestine war? Is a unified Arab nationalism still virile and strong, or is it being replaced by a loyalty to the fragmentary states which were established by the Allied Powers in the post-war settlement? This question of Arab unity is of prime importance for understanding the present complex situation in the Middle East, and in particular for comprehending the attitude of the Arab States towards the problem of the Palestine refugees.

Many factors serve to draw the Arab States together. The succession of world empires, which has controlled the area since history began, has tended to weld its members into a political and social unity. The Arabs, for the most part, share the same religion, the same language and the same race. There are many problems, strategic, political, economic, cultural and social, which call for unified action. The formation of an Arab bloc adds to its influence and prestige within the portals of the United Nations. The physical and psychological obstacles, which in the year 1920 stood in the way of the achievement of unity, have now been largely overcome by improved methods of communication, and by the strengthening of common cultural ties. The Arab League, formed in March 1945, with Great Britain's blessing, has brought together Egypt, Iraq, Syria, the Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Transjordan (and later the Yemen and Libya), for consultation and unified action. Article 2 of its Charter states that one of its objects is the co-ordination of the members' political action with a view to safeguarding their independence and sovereignty, and that another purpose is to ensure closer co-operation between the Member States in regard to economic and financial affairs, communications, cultural matters, questions concerning nationality, passports, etc., and problems of social welfare and public health. Unanimous decisions are obligatory on all members, majority decisions on those who accept them.

The Arab League's Constitution does not preclude the possibility of closer relations between two or more of its members. The Alexandria Protocol of December 1944 envisages such a development. It reads: 'Furthermore, every member State has the right to make an agreement with any

other nation whether it is a member of the League or not, so long as it is not contrary to the text or the spirit of the League.' During the past thirty years several schemes for closer union or federation between the various Arab States have been propounded and discussed, but none so far has materialised.

In these movements for co-operation the late King Abdullah played a leading part. At the Cairo Conference of 1921 he advocated the amalgamation of Palestine and Transjordan in a single State, or the linking of Transjordan with Iraq, but Great Britain objected. In July 1940 he sent two notes to the British government expressing the desire of Syria and Transjordan to be re-united in one state. In September 1941 he urged that Syria, the Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan should be incorporated in a single state. The British government promised not to impede this plan. When, however, the 'Greater Syria' scheme came up for discussion at the Alexandria Conference of 1944, on the understanding that it would fall within the framework of the Arab League Pact, it was firmly rejected as being premature, partly because of the situation then prevailing in Palestine, and partly because of opposition from the Lebanon. In his speech from the throne on the 11th November 1946 King Abdullah again mentioned the Greater Syria scheme as a basic principle in Transjordan's foreign policy. Again hostility to the plan was evinced, this time in both Syria and the Lebanon. The reasons underlying Syria's objection were Transjordan's dependence upon Great Britain, the less liberal character of the government in Transjordan, fear of Zionist penetration, and hopes for a more comprehensive form of Arab unity. King Abdullah was accused of territorial ambitions; the Lebanon, with its slender Christian majority, feared the consequences of absorption in a larger Muslim State.

Since 1932 Iraq has been an enthusiastic exponent of schemes for Arab unity. Support has been given to King Abdullah's plans in the hope that Iraq might secure an outlet on the Mediterranean coast. The idea of a Federal Union between Iraq and Transjordan was mooted but ended only

in a 'Treaty of Alliance and Brotherhood', signed on the 15th April, 1947. The Preamble states that the purpose of the treaty was to further the security of the two states by co-operation and complete mutual understanding on matters of common interest. Certain influential Iraqi families accused King Abdullah of personal ambitions, and complained of his interference in Iraq's internal affairs.

In March 1948 Syria announced her readiness to be united with Iraq on the basis of a full autonomous status for each country. The Iraqi Governement, however, was slow in its response, and Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which were opposed to any strengthening of Hashemite power, promised the Syrian leader, Colonel Husni El Zaim, formal recognition and immediate financial support if only Syria would adhere to her existing régime. Colonel Husni accepted their offer. His successor, Colonel Sami El Hinnawi, who came into power on the 14th August 1949, entered into secret negotiations with the Iraqi government on the subject of union. The Syrian Constituent Assembly which met on the 14th December 1949 declared itself in favour of a constitution based on Pan-Arabism, but was divided in its opinion as to whether the first step should be union with Iraq. Colonel Adib El Shishakli then took control, and his spokesman, Khalid El Azm, announced, on the 4th January 1950, that he would defend Syria's independence. Article I of the Syrian Constitution of 1950 states, however, that: 'Syria is a part of the Arab nation.'

General Nuri El Said of Iraq has, from time to time, advocated a still wider scheme of Arab unity, commonly known as 'The Fertile Crescent Plan', to embrace Syria, the Lebanon, Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq. This plan, too, has encountered serious obstacles. Whereas Iraq and Jordan are kingdoms, Syria and the Lebanon are republics. The smaller countries, like Jordan and the Lebanon, fear for their autonomy, while Syria and the Lebanon object to the treaties which bind Iraq and Jordan with Great Britain. Both Saudi Arabia and Egypt have opposed the plan—the former because of the traditional enmity between the family of Ibn Saud and the Hashemite dynasty, and the latter

because of apprehension lest she lose her leadership in the Middle East. In January 1954 General Neguib announced that Egypt would not agree to any scheme of Arab Federation which was not all-inclusive.

In these plans for closer Arab co-operation Lebanon's unique position as the only country in the Middle East with a Christian majority is to be recognised. The General Syria Congress held in Damascus in March 1920 reserved to the Lebanon its acquired right of autonomy within the framework of Syrian unity. But in August 1920 the French established the Republic of 'The Greater Lebanon' with frontiers much enlarged at Syria's expense, and many Syrian leaders have consistently opposed this arrangement ever since. The Lebanon, for her part, was only prepared to enter the Arab League on the assurance that her sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity would be recognised and respected by the other Arab States. Within the Lebanon itself different communities hold divergent views on the subject of Arab unity. The Sunni Muslims and a large number of Greek Orthodox Christians favour it, whereas the Uniates (i.e. members of Churches in communion with the Church of Rome) and certain Muslim minority groups are lukewarm or antagonistic. Some Lebanese regard their country as an integral part of the Arab world; others as a place of refuge for minorities; and still others as an outpost of western culture. Geographical contiguity necessitates a bond between the Lebanon and the neighbouring Arab States, but within any scheme of Arab unity the Lebanon's autonomy must be respected.

Up to the present time all schemes for Arab federation or union have foundered. A number of reasons may be given for their failure. Traditional Arab society was composed of a series of closed communities—the tribe, the family, the village, the district, the trade guild, the sect. Islam never succeeded completely in transcending these differences. Regional and sectarian loyalties have persisted and reasserted themselves from time to time in opposition to the forces of unification. Divisive tendencies were sharply accentuated by the different administrative, economic, and cultural systems

introduced by the mandatory powers, who bear no small share of responsibility for existing divisions in the Arab world. Furthermore, a wide range of cultural development separates the states of Arabia from those of the Mediterranean littoral. On the top of these cultural diversities, dynastic and regional jealousies supervene. History discloses that in the past the Arab world only achieved unity under the compulsion of a conquering army. Even today some Arab leaders wonder whether Arab unity will ever be realised except with the help of a foreign power. Otherwise they anticipate serious objection on the part of existing Arab States to the surrender to a common authority of the control of their foreign policy, defence, economic and cultural development, their judicial system and social welfare.

Though these states are largely artificial creations, conforming to the pattern of policy pursued by Great Britain and France at the end of the first world war, loyalty to them now often replaces the previously cherished ambition of a single Arab State. This accounts for the vacillation of Arab policy, as it is impossible in any given situation to foretell whether the forces of unity or of division will gain the upper hand. Hitherto the most constant factor has been the clash of interests between the Hashemite and non-Hashemite groups, though a reconciliation between King Hussein of Jordan and the present King of Arabia has been recently reported.

To escape from this dilemma a proposal has been made to constitute an Islamic bloc. King Abdullah at one time broached to the Turkish government the plan of a Muslim Federation extending from Morocco to Pakistan. In support of this proposal there is the valid argument that the problems of the Middle East are not limited by the boundaries of the Arab States. The concluding of the Saadabad Pact in 1937 underscored the fact that Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan are as much involved in Middle East defence as are the Arab States. The issues raised in the protection of the Persian Gulf, and in safeguarding the oil supplies of that area, are not an exclusively Arab concern. The Treaty just negotiated between Turkey and Pakistan is but one indication of the

latter's inevitable involvement in Middle East affairs, but the proposal to form an Islamic bloc is faced with the same kind of difficulty as confronts plans for unification of the Arab world. India now accuses Pakistan of trying 'to organise the Middle East into an Islamic Confederacy under the control of Karachi', while Egypt is afraid that Pakistan's intrusion will detract from her own position of leadership in the Middle East.

Professor Toynbee has expressed the hope that Islamic unity will avert the worst excesses of extreme nationalism. In his book, *The World and the West*, he writes: 'It is to be hoped that in the Islamic world, at any rate, the spread of this Western political malady [i.e. nationalism] may be arrested by a traditional Islamic feeling for unity. A world-wide political and social unity is necessary for us men and for our salvation today, in an atomic age, far more urgently than it has been in the past.' But such a unity can hardly be that of orthodox Islam with its division of the world into the House of Islam and the House of War. As yet Islam has scarcely been able to overcome the separatist tendencies within the Muslim world itself. If successful, a state or federation whose principle of cohesion is Islam would raise very serious issues for its non-Muslim minorities—a question to be considered in greater detail later. Another fundamental question that will need to be examined more closely is that of the precise relationship between Arab nationalism and Islam. As yet there has been no definition of that relationship which commands general consent.

For the moment, as we contemplate the series of events which followed as a consequence of the partition of Palestine by the United Nations, and its firm rejection by the Arab States, the point that needs to be borne in mind is the two-fold strain within Arab nationalism, namely, the trend on the one hand towards co-operation and unity, and on the other the tendency to rivalry and division. Of all the consequences of the Palestine war, the problem of the Palestine refugees is, in many respects, the most urgent and baffling. There are to-day hundreds of thousands of Palestinians scattered over the Middle East, of whom 872,000 are officially recognised as

refugees by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and are in receipt of rations. Of this number about 104,000 live in the Lebanon; 84,000 in Syria; 375,000 in West Jordan; 95,000 in East Jordan; and 200,000 in the Gaza district. In addition, there are a few thousand in Iraq under the care of the local government, and between 12,000 and 20,000 in Egypt, who receive no assistance from UNRWA. These figures do not include those individuals who, because of their private means, or for some other reason, did not register with UNRWA, nor those who now earn a salary large enough to debar them from relief. Neither do they include the 'economic' refugees, of whom there are at least 80,000 in West Jordan, and an equivalent number in Gaza. These 'economic' refugees are in desperate need, but do not qualify for rations as they still live in their original homes.

The Jews lay the whole blame for the refugee problem upon the Arab refusal to accept partition, and the invasion of Israel by the Arab armies the day after the mandate ended. They maintain that whereas the Israeli authorities urged the Arabs of Palestine not to move, the Arab Commanders ordered them to leave their homes, promising them an early return after the Jews 'had been driven into the sea.' Many also fled in bewilderment after desertion by their leaders. The Arabs, on the other hand, charge Jewish terrorism, and especially the massacre at Dar Yessin, with the main responsibility for the flight of the refugees. Other reasons may also be given—the general chaotic state of the country, fear of reprisals, the advice of British friends, and the evacuation of border villages for security reasons.

Though both Israel and the Arab States profess willingness to co-operate in the task of refugee relief, neither party admits financial responsibility for it. Israel's contention is that the Arabs, having created the problem, must find a solution for it: the Arabs, on the other hand, blame the Zionist Movement, the policy of the Western Powers, and the Partition Scheme of the United Nations, for all their troubles, and insist that it is upon this group that the obligation rests to undo the wrong they have inflicted. The United

Nations have, in fact, admitted partial responsibility for the refugees, and have initiated certain measures of relief which they regard as a humanitarian service, but which the Arabs accept as mere justice. Proposals in the United Nations that the relief services should be handed over to the Arab governments have failed hitherto to secure their consent, lest they be ultimately saddled with the responsibility of providing the enormous sums involved.

The influx of the Palestine refugees has undoubtedly dislocated the economy of the neighbouring Arab countries. One Arab delegate to the United Nations General Assembly of November 1952 described the situation in the words: 'It has glutted Arab markets and depressed wages, thus lowering the host countries' standard of living.' The economic competition between the refugees who receive rations, and the poorer inhabitants of the host countries who have no benefit from social security, has created strained relations. How grave the position is may be gauged by the following figures—in Jordan, out of a total population of approximately 1,250,000 no fewer than 470,000 are 'official' refugees. In the Gaza district only about 40,000 persons among the 300,000 inhabitants are self-supporting. Were it not for the money expended by UNRWA in the purchase of local foodstuffs for the refugees, and the provision thereby of hard currency, some of these countries would find it difficult, if not impossible, to bear the financial strain.

What, then, is the attitude of the Arab States to the Palestine refugees? Are they welcome there as Arabs, and, in most cases, as Muslims? In the first flush of resentment against partition much sympathy was undoubtedly shown by the governments and inhabitants of the Arab States to the refugees from Palestine, but the latter have long since outstayed their welcome. Here is the situation as Mr. Blandford, the Director of UNRWA, reported it to the seventh General Assembly: 'Although they have been sheltered in their host countries, and, in the notable instance of Jordan, have been offered full citizenship, the refugees are people apart, lacking for the most part status, homes, land, assets, proper clothing, and means of livelihood . . . in Lebanon they cannot be

issued working permits, and by law cannot hold jobs; in Egypt they cannot receive agency relief and assistance unless they are physically located in the 5 × 25 mile Gaza strip; in Syria, although they are permitted to work when they can find jobs, they have not been offered citizenship.' In 1951 the Arab League approved a draft agreement whereby the refugees might either retain their original nationality, or acquire the citizenship of the country of asylum, but this agreement has never been properly implemented. Except between Syria and the Lebanon, severe restrictions are imposed upon the movement of the refugees from one Middle East country to another, and in general, special refugee conferences are prohibited. In this context, sentiments of Arab nationalism and of Muslim brotherhood have failed to triumph over selfish interests and local loyalties.

The first task of the United Nations Relief Agency was to keep the refugees alive, and prevent the spread of sickness among them. The provision of education and welfare services followed later. An attempt was then made to uphold refugee morale, and to promote their self-support by a series of work relief projects, including road-making and afforestation. But to quote Mr. Blandford again: 'The Agency found itself financing and operating labour camps to build public works which the governments themselves would have built the following year. There was no enduring benefit for the refugees nor financial relief for the Agency.' Under Mr. Blandford's guidance the Agency thereupon worked out a comprehensive programme of refugee reintegration to cover the period from 1951 to 1954. It comprised the following measures: finding employment for refugees, providing them with skilled training, making loans or grants to enable them to establish small businesses, building houses in or near urban areas where employment may be found, establishing rural villages in areas where land is available for cultivation, developing agricultural lands through well-drilling, irrigation works, and in other ways, and in general financing economic development and providing technical assistance where there are assurances of profitable benefit to refugees.

At first sight this programme presents many attractive

features to both the Arab States and the refugees. It offers assistance in the economic development of the Arab countries, especially where, as in Syria, there are large areas of cultivable land as yet undeveloped. It furnishes capital for large-scale irrigation schemes, as in the Yarmuk Valley, where some 140,000 acres within the kingdom of Jordan are to be brought under cultivation. In order to secure the co-operation of the refugees, UNRWA stressed the fact that the primary purpose of the programme is to improve refugee conditions so as to eliminate the need for camp life and ration lists, and that it is in no sense a scheme of resettlement, or a final solution to the refugee problem. The legal rights of the refugees to repatriation or compensation are not to be prejudiced by it.

The project, however, is exposed to two lines of criticism. The first is its inadequacy and slowness. It is estimated that the sum of $200 million allocated for the project would be sufficient for the reintegration of only 320,000 refugees, out of a total of 872,000. The economies of the Middle East countries offer little prospect of the easy absorption of the remaining half million. Furthermore, large-scale projects demand a lengthy period of time for preparation and execution. As yet, only a small fraction of the $200 million has been expended, and meanwhile the number of refugees is steadily increasing. The birth-rate is high and exceeds the death rate by 25,000 persons per annum.

The second, and more fundamental, objection is the conviction of both the Arab States and the refugees that the aim of the Western Powers, who are the largest contributors to UNRWA funds, is the permanent resettlement of the Palestine refugees in the neighbouring Arab States as a final solution to the refugee problem, so as to render repatriation unnecessary. This is the solution openly advocated in the United Nations by the Israeli delegates. On the other hand, the United Nations General Assembly's resolution of the 11th December 1948 reads: 'The refugees wishing to return to their homes, and live at peace with their neighbours, should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date.' The Arab States are committed, officially, to supporting the

claims of the refugees to repatriation, with the result that those states, which would like to benefit by the expenditure of UNRWA's reintegration funds within their territory, find themselves in an equivocal position.

The question of reparation apart, the Arab States reveal a wide diversity of attitudes towards the settlement, temporary or permanent, of the refugees in their midst. The Lebanon objects that it is already densely populated and bothered about its own unemployment problem, so that it is not in a position to absorb more than a fraction of the 104,000 'official' refugees now within its borders. Another factor that weighs with the Lebanese authorities is the fear lest the permanent settlement of the refugees, of whom the majority are Muslims, would disturb the delicate balance now existing between the Christian and the Muslim communities. The Gaza strip is another overcrowded area, and by all reckonings a large proportion of its refugees must be transferred elsewhere. A plan has been submitted for conveying fresh water from the Nile under the Suez Canal for the irrigation of sections of the Sinai Desert, so that some refugees from the Gaza area may settle there, but even if the scheme proved practicable it would provide for only a fraction of the total number in need.

There is grave doubt whether the soil of Jordan is sufficiently fertile to permit the settlement of all the refugees now resident there, and in East Jordan resentment is felt at the economic competition of the refugees. Syria, on the other hand, is a country capable of considerable agricultural development, and should be able easily to absorb its quota of 84,000 refugees. But only one-third of this group are farmers. There is no disposition to receive additional refugees from outside the country, and the people of Syria would greatly prefer to have United Nations' money for schemes for their own benefit. Large-scale irrigation plans in Iraq would ultimately provide accommodation for all the Palestine refugees but Iraq has been in the forefront of the countries insisting on the right of repatriation. All United Nations plans for settling Palestine refugees in the Arab countries must naturally take account of the economic condition of

these countries, as well as of the plans of their governments for economic development. The Arab States, supersensitive about their newly-won independence, view with the utmost suspicion any interference by the United Nations in their internal affairs, as was made abundantly clear in the discussion of the report of the Clapp Commission of 1949–50.

The refugees, in general, have no confidence in UNRWA'S reintegration schemes. They believe that their only objective is to remove as many names as possible from the ration lists. They fear that once they lose their refugee status they will never recover it, and so will be deprived of the benefit of all United Nations resolutions in their favour. The attitude, therefore, of the majority of the refugees is non-co-operative, and, at the last meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, the Acting-Director of UNRWA pointed out that it would be contrary to the principles of the United Nations Charter to try to compel them to comply. The burning desire of the refugees for repatriation is compounded partly of nostalgia for their ancestral home (and some would elect for repatriation even if it meant living under Jewish rule), and partly local patriotism. A Palestinian nationalism has emerged parallel to the local nationalisms of the Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and other Middle East States, and has been fortified by the unhappy experiences of the past few years. This factor of Palestinian nationalism is commonly overlooked in many of the arguments in favour of the resettlement of the refugees in Arab lands. Thus the Israeli representative in the Unitied Nations stated recently: 'Given the normal affinities of the refugees for the peoples of the same language, culture, and national sentiment among whom they were living, their social and economic absorption should not be difficult.'

Against the repatriation of the refugees the State of Israel has firmly set her face. In justification of this attitude several reasons are put forward. As the Arab States, by rejecting partition, created the refugee problem, theirs must be the responsibility for solving it. The return of the refugees, it is said, would imperil the security of Israel and so be a threat to peace in the Middle East. Israel can never bear the cost of

rehabilitating so large a number, and, in any case, by having to receive since 1948, not only 500,000 Jewish immigrants from Europe, but also 350,000 who were obliged to flee from Arab countries, Israel has not room for them. Conditions in the Middle East, it is claimed, have changed so radically in recent years that the United Nations resolution of December 1948 no longer applies. In short, Israel proposes that the problem of the Palestine refugees should be solved as was that of the Greek and Turkish refugees in the 1920s, by an interchange of populations.

Under intense pressure from the USA, the Israeli government agreed, at the Lausanne Conference of 1949, to the repatriation of not more than 100,000 refugees, including some 25,000 who had already returned, on the understanding that the maximum number of refugees in Israel would not exceed 250,000, and that they would be settled in areas determined by Israel herself in accordance with her own economic and security needs. As the Arabs adhered to their demands for the right of repatriation of all refugees, and as the State Department did not at the time consider adequate the number acceptable to Israel, the proposal was dropped and Israel's offer has since been withdrawn. Hitherto a few thousand Arabs have been permitted to return on personal grounds, or to rejoin their families, in addition to about 28,000 who returned without permission and whose position has now been legalised.

At the Paris Conference of 1951 the Palestine Conciliation Commission proposed that: 'The Government of Israel agree to the repatriation of a specified number of Arab refugees in categories which could be integrated into the economy of the State of Israel, and who wish to return and to live in peace with their neighbours.' This proposal was rejected outright by the Arab delegates. On the 1st July 1952 Israel undertook responsibility for the 19,000 Arab refugees at that time in Israel, who had previously been dependent upon rations supplied by UNRWA. In May 1953 Mr. Sharett, then Foreign Minister, closed the door against repatriation by stating that Israel could not agree to any repatriation—not even a token one. Mr. Eban presented Israel's point of view

at the United Nations General Assembly: 'It was difficult,' he said, 'to understand how it could be maintained in all fairness that the smallest country, having borne the brunt of two vast refugee problems, should now assume the third problem created by the Arab aggression.' He claimed that: 'Repatriation would result in cultural conflict, economic adversity, and a threat to the security of Israel.' Israel contrasts the thousands of acres in Arab territory with the small area at her disposal.

The Arabs dismiss all these arguments as specious. The right of the refugees to return to their homes is grounded, they say, not only in the United Nations resolution of December 1948, but in the Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They charge the Palestine Conciliation Commission with contravening the terms of the United Nations resolution of December 1948, and they demand a reference to the International Court of Justice of the legality of the refugees' right to return to their homes. Israel's immigration policy, is, they maintain, a danger to peace in the Middle East. They accuse Israel of wantonly destroying Arab villages, and the Israeli Public Custodian with illegally selling refugee property to the Jewish National Fund. In his book *The New Star in the Near East* Mr. Bilby describes how 'Scores of Arab villages, deemed uninhabitable, had been razed as an insurance against their owners' return.'

The United Kingdom representative to the United Nations has adopted the position that under the terms of the United Nations resolution the right of the refugees to repatriation is unquestionable, but that nevertheless the refugees would be better advised to settle in Arab lands. Apart from the difficulties involved in restoring to their original owners property and lands now occupied by Jewish immigrants, many observers believe that few refugees, if allowed to return, would wish to remain under Israeli rule for any length of time. Their place of residence would be determined for them, and conformity to conditions in Israel would be made obligatory. Political and economic difficulties would inevitably arise, and it is a significant fact that few of the refugees now resident in Israel would recommend the subjection of their fellow countrymen to Israeli rule.

IV

Refugee Claims

IF it is wiser for the refugees not to return to Israel, and if they do not desire permanent resettlement in other Arab countries, where (except in Jordan, and possibly Syria) they are not wanted, what future lies before them? The Partition Scheme of November 1947 envisaged the establishment of a State of Arab Palestine, linked in an economic union with a Jewish State. Today Palestine, as a country, has ceased to exist. Of the territory assigned by the United Nations to the Arabs, certain districts in West Galilee, the central area, and the Negev, were overrun by the Israeli armies. Egyptian forces still control the Gaza strip. As, however, military occupation of the area has proved a heavy financial liability, the Egyptian government would probably be prepared to withdraw, provided the Gaza strip did not fall into the hands of either Israel or Jordan. King Abdullah, relying on a resolution passed by a Palestine Arab Congress, which was convened with his approval in Jericho in December 1948, annexed the rest of the country, to the great annoyance of the other Arab States, and in contravention of a resolution passed by the Arab League at its meeting in April 1948, to the effect that the Arab armies had entered Palestine merely to restore order and would withdraw so soon as a state had been set up in accordance with the wishes of the majority of its inhabitants.

Reference has been made earlier to King Abdullah's ambitions for extending his territory. The Peel Commission of 1936, in advocating a Partition Scheme, had pressed that the Arab section should be added to Transjordan. King Abdullah, once having secured West Jordan and acquired the prestige attached to occupation of the Holy Places in Jerusalem, was no longer interested in the war with Israel,

and was ready to make peace. Only the opposition of the other Arab States restrained him. When, on the 24th April 1949, the Transjordan Parliament approved the unity of the two countries, King Abdullah declared that he was 'safeguarding full Arab rights and sovereignties in Palestine without prejudicing the final settlement within the framework of national aspiration, Arab co-operation, and international justice.' Great Britain's recognition of the annexation, at the same time that it gave *de jure* recognition to Israel, seemed to imply its permanence—a view which conflicts with that of the other Arab States. They regard Jordan's occupation as a temporary measure only, pending a peace settlement. The first Article of the new Constitution of Jordan of January 1952, states that: 'Its territories shall not be partitioned, and no part thereof shall be ceded.'

Israel's frontiers, as laid down in the Partition Scheme of November 1947, were admittedly unsatisfactory. They were drawn without adequate regard for strategic or economic factors, and were designed mainly to include the maximum possible number of Jews within the Jewish State. Count Bernadotte, the mediator, accordingly drew up an alternative plan in September 1948, whereby the Jews would surrender part of the Negev in return for Western Galilee, and secondly, Jerusalem would be under King Abdullah, but demilitarised and internationalised. This plan, however, was never implemented as President Truman turned against it, and King Abdullah was not interested in the Negev. His aspiration was directed towards Gaza and an outlet for Jordan on the Mediterranean coast.

Under the Partition Scheme the area of Israel was to be 5,687 square miles. By her victories in the Palestine war she augmented it to 7,800 square miles. At the Lausanne Conference of 1949 the Arabs submitted a note demanding that if Israel was unwilling to readmit the refugees she must surrender all the territory occupied beyond the limits set by the Partition Scheme, so that the Arabs might be settled there. This demand was repeated by Dr. Fadil El Jamali (now Prime Minister of Iraq) at the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly of November 1952. Mr. Ben Gurion (until

recently Prime Minister of Israel) maintained, on the other hand, that 'What Israel has won on the battlefield she is determined not to yield at the Council table.' Israel refuses to surrender anything which will threaten her security or her independence. Her attitude in this matter has aroused anxiety, even among her friends. Dr. McDonald, the USA Ambassador to Israel, in his book *My Mission to Israel* reveals that in 1948 the USA government was 'unwilling to recognise Israel's possession of any territories beyond the November 29th Partition line unless Israel made territorial compensations elsewhere to the Arabs.'

The present boundaries of Israel are those defined by the Armistice Agreements of 1949, and bear no direct relation to the Partition Scheme or to strategic or economic considerations. They were fixed to accord with the military situation at the time. The Armistice Agreements recognised that these boundaries are not final. Article II 2 reads: 'It is also recognised that no provision of this Agreement shall in any way prejudice the rights, claims, and position of either Party hereto in the ultimate peaceful settlement of the Palestine question, the provisions of this Agreement being dictated exclusively by military considerations.' In similar terms Article VI states that 'The Armistice Demarcation Lines . . . are without prejudice to future territorial settlements or boundary lines, or to claims of either Party relating thereto.'

Both sides agree that the present boundary lines are unsatisfactory. Border incidents are inevitable so long as Arab farmers are separated by an arbitrary frontier from the lands they used to till. Refugees pass over the boundaries by night to bring back something which they regard as their own property from their former farms, for their starving children. Infiltration leads to shooting and loss of life. Reprisal raids, like that of Qibya in October 1953, serve merely to deepen animosity and hatred. Such raids, in Arab eyes, contravene not only the Armistice Agreements, but the Security Council's Cease-Fire Order of July 1948, as well as the Charter of the United Nations. Nothing short of a total peace will terminate infiltration, especially when, as in Qalqilya, the population

which has been swollen by the refugee influx, now has only 7,000 dunams as compared with 50,000 previously. The Truce Supervision Organisation cannot effectively patrol the nearly four hundred miles of frontier between Israel and Jordan, and the Mixed Armistice Commissions only come into action after incidents have occurred. Closer co-operation between the Defence Forces and Police of the two countries might diminish the number of incidents, but would not eliminate them.

The demilitarised zones laid down by the Armistice Agreements have proved another source of contention, in particular in the Lake Huleh area. Arabs complain that the action of the Israeli authorities in this area has disturbed the strategic situation, as well as affected adversely the economic position of the local Arab inhabitants. The settlement of a group of Israelis in the area of El Auja in the south has also been contested. Israel acknowledges the provocative character of the present arrangements, and, at the last meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Eban suggested that, as part of the peace negotiations, consideration should be given to modifications of the Armistice frontiers, e.g. the elimination of the demilitarised zones 'where division of authority has caused great tension at critical times,' and adjustments by mutual exchanges so that villages might be reunited with the lands and fields from which they have been separated. But Israeli proposals cover only minor territorial readjustments. As Mr. Sharett indicated in May 1953, peace negotiations must be with Israel as she is, and not as some would like to see her.

The Arabs are irritated by Israel's refusal to make any major territorial concessions, but what aggravates the situation still more is their fear that further large-scale Jewish immigration into Israel will inevitably result in a policy of territorial expansion. Certain elements in Israel have never accepted the existing boundaries as final. During the election campaign of 1948–49 the Herut (i.e. Freedom) Party, issued a manifesto which claimed that: 'The Jewish Homeland, whose area covers both sides of the Jordan, is a complete historic and geographic entity. Dissection of the Homeland

is an unlawful act; agreement to dissection is also unlawful, and is not binding on the Jewish people. It is the duty of this generation to return to Jewish sovereignty those parts of the Homeland which were torn off from it and given over to foreign rule.' The proper frontiers of Israel are conceived by such groups as being either the Jordan River or the eastern boundary of Jordan.

The report of the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly held in January 1952 records the answer of the Israeli delegate to Arab fears: 'Replying to Arab arguments that population pressure within Israel will inevitably lead to aggressive expansion by the new State, Mr. Eban contended that such arguments lose all validity when, despite mass immigration, there were still large stretches of barren land in the country.' The Israeli government has on several occasions reiterated these assurances. One of the primary purposes of the Three-Power Declaration of the 25th May 1950 was to impress upon both sides the determination of the USA, Great Britain and France to resist by all means, inside and outside the United Nations, any demand to modify present boundaries by aggression. But Arabs have lost faith in western declarations. One possible danger is that the threat of bankruptcy, resulting from the Arab economic blockade and boycott, might encourage extreme nationalist elements in Israel to embark upon an expansionist excursion into Arab territory. A firm international guarantee of the frontiers as finally determined in a peace settlement is a fundamental condition of its permanence.

The control of Jerusalem is another potential cause of dispute between the Arabs and the Jews. Concern for the protection of the Holy Places in the city induced the United Nations General Assembly at its meeting on the 29th November 1947 to follow the recommendations of the majority report of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, and to decide on a special international régime whereby the city would be demilitarised and neutralised. To this plan the Jewish Agency reluctantly agreed. The Arabs rejected it outright, together with the Partition Scheme. The failure, however, of the British authorities in

the early months of 1948, and of the United Nations later, to protect the 100,000 Jewish residents in the city, convinced the Israeli authorities in Tel Aviv that they must themselves assume responsibility for the safety and administration of the city. Some of the heaviest fighting of the war took place in Jerusalem. On the 1st February 1949 the sections of the city under Jewish control were made subject to the same regulations as the rest of Israel. The same month, the Israeli Parliament held its first session there, and proclaimed Jerusalem the capital of the state. From that date onwards the various Israeli ministries were gradually moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, including, finally, the Foreign Office, against whose transfer the Western Powers lodged a protest. On the 16th June 1949 Mr. Sharett told the Israeli Parliament that Israel would not agree to the internationalisation of Jerusalem, even for the sake of a Peace Treaty with the Arab States.

The Jewish determination to hold on to Jerusalem is a compound of religious sentiment, nationalism and prestige. 'Next year in Jerusalem' was part of the Passover prayer. The Zionists took as their motto the words of Psalm 137, 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.' A State of Israel without Jerusalem would be like Italy without Rome, or Greece without Athens. These feelings are fortified by the knowledge that the present boundaries of Israel do not include the greater part of the old Hebrew kingdoms of Judea and Samaria. From the strategic angle, however, the Jerusalem pocket constitutes a dangerous bulge.

Within the Israeli section of the city there are more than fifty important Christian Churches and Institutions, and the Israeli government is prepared to safeguard access to them. It has submitted a plan whereby the United Nations would appoint an organisation, or individual, for the supervision of the Holy Places. The proposed Constitution of Israel contains an Article reading: 'Existing rights in respect to Holy Places, and religious buildings or sites, shall not be denied or impaired. The liberty of access, visiting, and transit to Holy Places shall be guaranteed.' Even now, at the time of the

great festivals of Christmas and Easter, joint arrangements are made by Israel and Jordan for visits by pilgrims from the other side to Bethlehem in Jordan, and Nazareth in Israel.

Jordan is as firmly opposed as Israel to the internationalisation of Jerusalem. On the 27th July 1953 the Jordan Cabinet met for the first time in Jerusalem, and on the 6th August 1953 Parliament held its first session in the city. On the 11th June 1953 the Muslim Brotherhood issued a statement that: 'The internationalisation of Jerusalem means placing it under Zionist influence as a prelude to its definite loss.' Jordan's desire to maintain its footing in Jerusalem is mainly a matter of prestige and security.

The existing divisions of the city, based on the dispositions of the Israeli and Jordanian forces at the time of the Armistice Agreement, is in every way unsatisfactory. The Arab-held sectors contain many places of special concern to the Jews—the Wailing Wall, the old Jewish quarter with its historic synagogues, the famous Jewish cemeteries on the Mount of Olives and Mount Zion, and the Hadassah Hospital and Hebrew University on Mount Scopus. It is self-evident that Israel and Jordan would each like to control the whole city.

The scheme for an international régime for Jerusalem still stands on the pages of the United Nations General Assembly, but no detailed plan for its implementation has yet won general acceptance. Behind it stand the Vatican and many leaders of the Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant Churches. On the 23rd October 1948, and again on the 15th April 1949, Pope Pius XII composed an Encyclical, urging international guarantees for free access to the Holy Places. Many Christians support the proposal of an international régime—not only for the sake of the Holy Places, but also to enable the refugees from Jerusalem to return to their homes, to provide congregations for the churches which at present have few worshippers, and to ensure the survival in Jerusalem of the authentic traditions of Christianity. Others favour the existence of one area in the Holy Land where Muslims, Christians and Jews can learn to live together in harmony under international control. All the Arab States, with the

exception of Jordan, have now reversed their former attitude, and support the plan of an international *corpus separatum* in the Jerusalem area.

The final disposition of the territory of Arab Palestine should, in the opinion of all the Arab States except Jordan, and of several United Nations delegates from other countries, be left to the Palestinians to decide, on the basis of a plebiscite. At the Paris Conference of 1951 the Arabs submitted the claim that: 'As regards the part of Palestine not occupied by the Jews, its fate must be decided by the inhabitants, in accordance with democratic principles, and on the basis of self-determination, as laid down in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.' This demand was repeated by the delegates from Egypt and Iraq at the United Nations General Assembly in January 1952.

What, then, are the declared wishes of the refugees about the future of their country? Relations between them and the Egyptian authorities in the Gaza strip have never been cordial, and an early termination of the present military occupation is desired. In Jordan there has been marked tension between the highly educated Palestinians of the West Bank and the more conservative and reactionary Jordanians of the East Bank, especially under the premiership of Tawfiq Abul Huda, though the situation has eased under the present government. When Jordan ceded to Israel in the Armistice Agreement of the 3rd April 1949 some excellent farming land, thus separating it from the villages in which its cultivators lived, the Palestine Arabs were indignant, and their desire for union with Jordan suffered a setback. Some Palestinians believe that the day will come when their greater numbers, and superior education, will give them control of the administration of Jordan, but others would prefer the implementation of the Partition Scheme, or a resuscitation of the plan of cantonisation of Palestine, which the Arab States proposed in November 1947 as a substitute for partition.

The economic viability of a State of Arab Palestine is open to doubt. In this respect it resembles Jordan itself, which,

with or without West Jordan, is not economically self-supporting, and is dependent on a British subsidy for the balancing of its budget. If a state of Arab Palestine were set up, it would almost certainly have to form part of an Arab union or federation, linking it and Jordan with either Syria or Iraq, or both countries. Within a regional grouping of this kind an Arab Palestine would presumably enjoy the same autonomy as the other constituent elements.

A common mistake is to forget that the refugee problem has both political and economic aspects. The legitimate desire of the refugees to maintain their identity as a community cannot be satisfied apart from the grant of some measure of autonomy, but an Arab Palestine could never accommodate all the refugees, even if the territory originally assigned to it, and now occupied by Israel, were restored. A substantial proportion of the refugees must be content with settlement in other Arab countries—a solution which would be rendered more acceptable if it formed part of a federal scheme.

In passing, a word must be said about the so-called Arab government of all Palestine, established by the Mufti El Haj Amin El Husseini under Egyptian auspices in September 1948, and located temporarily at Gaza. A cabinet was appointed, with Ahmed Hilmi as Prime Minister, and, on the 1st October 1948, the Haj Amin was acknowledged as President of the Palestine National Association. On the 12th October 1948 this so-called Palestine government was recognised by Egypt and Iraq, and on the 14th by Syria and the Lebanon. But the majority of the refugees never gave it their approval, and on the 20th December 1948 King Abdullah appointed a new Mufti in place of the Haj Amin.

Two other issues are still outstanding between Israel and the Arab States, namely, the release of frozen assets and the payment of compensation for refugee property. On these questions the gap between the two points of view is not so wide. The sums standing to the credit of about 6,000 Palestine refugees in banks in Israel are said to amount to $5 million (= LI 2,500,000). At first Israel would only consent to their release if, at the same time, Jewish accounts in

Iraq were unfrozen. Later she withdrew this stipulation. One million pounds have now been made available for partial payment of the money due, to be used, in the first instance, for the clearance of accounts of fifty pounds or less. It was hoped that by this gesture, tension between the two sides would be lessened. On the contrary, the release has aroused several protests from the refugees—against the imposition of a 10 per cent capital levy on their funds; against a procedure which implied, as they thought, the signing away of their remaining rights; against any appearance of giving recognition to the State of Israel. In the end the Israeli government was induced to waive its claim to the 10 per cent capital tax. The intrinsic value, however, of such small payments to the refugees, beyond the immediate assistance they offered to the destitute, or for the settlement of debts, is an open question. Much larger sums are needed to enable them to open shops, or to start again in business.

The United Nations General Assembly, at its session on the 11th December 1948, passed a resolution that: 'Compensation should be paid for the property of those [refugees] choosing not to return, and for loss or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible.' When, in the autumn of 1951, the Palestine Conciliation Commission proposed, at the Paris Conference, the mutual cancellation of war damage claims, neither party would agree, as each considered the other responsible for the Palestine conflict, and, therefore, also for the payment of war damages. As regards compensation, the Israeli government has never questioned the rights of the refugees, but it has insisted that compensation should only be discussed in the context of a general settlement. Later it conceded the point, but maintained that, in assessing the amount of compensation to be paid, consideration must be given to Israel's own financial position, Jewish losses of property during the fighting, and the expropriation of Jewish property by Arab States. The opinion of the Palestine Conciliation Commission in 1951 was that Israel could not be expected, in view of her financial position, to pay her full debt, except over a long

period of years. In January 1953 Mr. Eban called the attention of the United Nations General Assembly to the effect of the Arab boycott and blockade on Israel's capacity to pay.

The unfortunate impression made on Arab minds by these contentions is that Israel is wishing to evade her responsibilities, though the inference is probably unfair. By all standards of justice the Jews who lost their property in Iraq and other Arab States should be compensated, but not at the expense of the refugees. There have also been frequent Arab complaints against the destruction of refugee property in Israel, and the sale of Arab lands and buildings by the Israeli Council for the Custody of Absentee Property, under a law of the 14th March 1952, to 'the State, the Jewish National Fund, the local authorities, or a government institution, to be set up for the resettlement of Arab refugees.' Another complaint is that the rents now being paid to the custodian's office in Israel fall far below the true market rate. The Arab States submit that the United Nations share with Israel the 'responsibility for paying compensation to refugees who were not repatriated, and for paying indemnities for lost and damaged property in general' (PCC Report). Compensation spread over a number of years would be of relatively little value to the refugees, and if Israel cannot negotiate a loan wherewith to meet refugee claims once and for all, the United Nations, in virtue of its responsibilities, and for the sake of a settlement, would be well advised to give its help by making a substantial contribution to the cost.

The claim submitted to the United Nations by the refugees is that compensation should include not only indemnity for loss or damage to holdings and property caused by aggression and through the enforced absence of the owner, but also compensation for loss of careers and income from established industries, trade, agriculture and professional vocations, and that the actual value of properties and holdings, movable or immovable, should be paid—the assessment being made on the basis of property values in November 1947. They suggest also that the question of the proportion of the value of state domain, including highways, harbours, railways, etc., to be

paid to the refugees, should be studied by experts. One estimate made by a refugee leader of the amount of compensation due, reaches the colossal figure of £2,000 million. Mr. Holgen Andersen, appointed by the Palestine Conciliation Commission to assess the value of refugee property, estimated immovable property at about £100 million, and movable at £20 million. An impartial tribunal of experts should be able to determine the equitable figure.

Difficulties will be sure to emerge when the time for payment of compensation arrives. The ownership of much Arab land was still a matter of litigation in 1948. The tracing of owners may not be simple, as many are not registered on the ration lists. The Palestine Conciliation Commission has wisely proposed that it would be better for Israel to pay to the United Nations a lump sum, from which the payment to individual owners would be made by a United Nations trustee. The refugees have put forward a claim which is not unreasonable, that in all negotiations regarding compensation, they should be represented at each stage of the proceedings, and should have the right of appeal.

But the refugees, because they lack political power, encounter great difficulties in making their voice heard. In the struggle between Arab nationalism and Jewish nationalism, they are the ones who suffer most. They move between the Scylla of self-centred Arab parochialism and the Charybdis of Jewish intransigence. The Arab world is sensitive to their needs and finds its own centre of political unity in its opposition to western 'imperialism' and Zionist 'expansionism.' But when the interests of the refugees and those of the Arab States clash, it is the latter that almost invariably prevail. Many individual Jews experience pangs of conscience about the Arab refugees, but their emotions are stifled in loyalty to the demands of a growing Jewish State.

V

The United Nations and the Palestine Problem

THE statement has often been made that justice, not expediency, should determine the solution of the Palestine problem. But what precisely constitutes a just solution of a problem so complex and so baffling? The grounds of the Jewish claim to Palestine are biblical, historical and legal, over and above the rights of the Jews to a national life of their own. The Arabs, on the other hand, can point to their long tenure of residence, and their right to self-determination. They are fully justified in denying the right of Christendom to discharge its obligation to the Jews at the expense of the Palestine Arabs. But, in the end, a decision on the justice of the case will depend entirely on the premises on which the judgment is based. As the Peel Commission pointed out, the tragedy of the problem is that 'it is fundamentally a conflict of right with right.' In the first instance, both the Arabs and the Jews took possession of the land by conquest, and by the same criterion the British might have claimed the right to decide its future after the first world war. The Arabs are inclined to forget the sacrifices of the Allied forces which were the price of their liberation.

Jewish nationalism and Arab nationalism are both uncompromising, and their claims irreconcilable. Clearly this was a case for some impartial international tribunal which could adjudicate between them. It might be argued that the League of Nations in 1920, and the United Nations in 1947, constituted such a body. But it is a fact of history that the decisions of the League of Nations were dominated by the particular interests of the Allied Powers, while the discussions in the United Nations on the future of Palestine were influenced by

a number of extraneous factors, such as the importance of the Jewish vote in the USA elections, and, on the other side, the pressure of oil interests. Without diplomatic pressure from the USA the Partition Scheme of November 1947 would probably never have been approved by the United Nations. Arthur Koestler calls attention to the fact that in the space of three days between the vote on the partition question in the United Nations Political Committee, and the final vote in the United Nations General Assembly, no fewer than twelve delegates changed their minds on the rights and wrongs of the issue!

The question has been raised whether the United Nations ever possessed the legal right to decide on partition. At the session of the United Nations General Assembly held in December 1952 Mr. Ahmed Shukairi submitted on behalf of the Arabs the argument that 'Being merely a moral authority, the Assembly could not partition a territory, divide peoples, confer sovereignty, or create a state, since states can only be formed by act of a sovereign state, by force of arms, or by the will of the people.' The Arabs have, therefore, urged that the legality of the decision about partition be referred to the World Court of Justice, but the United Nations have refused the demand. The denial to the Palestine Arabs of the right of self-determination conflicted, so the Arab delegates argued, with President Wilson's Fourteen Points, with the Covenant of the League of Nations, with the Atlantic Charter, and with the Preamble to the United Nations. At the same session the Israeli delegate maintained that the decisions of the Security Council, taken under Article 25 of the Charter, were obligatory, but that it was debatable whether the resolutions of the Assembly adopted under Article 11 were mandatory on Member States. One fact cannot be disputed, if there is to be a procedure for effecting peaceful change in a changing world, some international organisation is needed to decide between discordant claims.

The Partition Scheme itself was liable to be criticised as regards both the totally unsatisfactory frontiers it laid down, and its unrealistic assumption that at that time an economic union between the Jewish and Arab States would be practic-

able. Nevertheless, once the decision on partition had been reached, the United Nations should have insisted on the compliance of both sides with it. Instead, the moment the United Nations discovered that the scheme was likely to evoke the armed hostility of the Arab States, it began, like Great Britain under the mandate, to vacillate in its policy. The USA, the main supporter of the partition plan, not only revealed a cleavage of opinion between the State Department and the White House, but, on the 25th March 1948 Mr. Truman sabotaged any hope of the enforcement of partition by stating that: 'We could not undertake to impose this solution on the people of Palestine by the use of American troops, both on charter grounds, and as a matter of national policy.' The USA resolution, calling for a temporary trusteeship in Palestine, was discussed at a special session of the United Nations General Assembly held from the 16th April to the 14th May 1948. But events moved too quickly for the United Nations, for, on the 14th May the mandate ended and the State of Israel was proclaimed. President Truman, against the advice of his counsellors, at once gave *de facto* recognition to the new state, while Russia followed with its recognition *de facto* and *de jure*.

The position of the United Nations was rendered much more difficult by the refusal of Great Britain either to participate in an enforced solution to the Palestine problem, or to allow the committee, which the United Nations had appointed to supervise the transition from the mandatory régime to the partition plan, to land in Palestine before the 1st May. The condition of administrative chaos and public insecurity in which Great Britain left the country reflected no credit on her or on the United Nations. The anarchy which prevailed during the early months of 1948 was one of the main contributory causes of the flight of the refugees.

To the credit of the United Nations stands its admission of partial responsibility for the refugee problem, and its efforts to relieve their distress. Without this help thousands would have died of hunger, disease, or privation. Criticism of UNRWA is, however, manifold. There are accusations of inefficiency, red tape, excessive reliance on international staff,

corruption, and subservience to pressure from Arab governments. UNRWA has failed to determine with accuracy the total number of legitimate refugees, and an unspecified number of the poorer inhabitants of the host countries have succeeded in registering their names on the ration lists. Some 20,000 of the 'economic' refugees in West Jordan receive half-rations, and all of them benefit from UNRWA's health services and anti-malaria campaigns. Many, too, are recipients of milk from the United Nations International Emergency Fund (UNICEF), but much more ought to have been done for this desperately hard-hit group.

There are frequent complaints about the inadequacy of the refugee ration, but the standard of living of the 35 per cent of the refugees assembled in camps is in all probability higher than that to which they were formerly accustomed in Palestine, or, indeed, than that of the poorer classes in the host countries today. For them, commendable medical, educational and welfare facilities have been provided, but the remaining 65 per cent, who are scattered over the towns and villages of the Middle East, living in caves, improvised dwellings, or rented rooms, suffer from over-crowding and a lowering of vitality, which exposes them to the ravages of tuberculosis. About half of the refugees are children under fifteen years of age, many of whom have no living memory beyond their refugee experiences. Lack of work, and the breakdown of the Muslim custom of female segregation, have contributed to a serious lowering of morale. As the paltry resources with which the refugees originally fled, anticipating an early return, are progressively exhausted, an increasing number are obliged, against their own wishes, to request admission to a refugee camp. Failure to implement its scheme of refugee integration has compelled UNRWA to expend a proportionately larger sum on relief, with the result that its three-year relief budget for the period 1951 to 1954 was spent in two years.

The United Nations must also be given credit for putting a stop to the fighting in Palestine in 1948. After three appeals from the Security Council for a cease-fire during the months of March and April had met with failure, a truce of four

weeks was eventually secured on the 11th June 1948, and a second one of indefinite duration on the 18th July. There were, however, flagrant violations of the two truces by both sides. In defiance of their terms, fresh armaments were purchased by both Arabs and Jews, while the latter rushed new immigrants into the firing line. Fighting broke out during the second truce in the Negev and in Galilee. Sanctions were threatened against Israel if she refused to withdraw her troops in the Negev to the line held on the 14th October, but when she declined to comply no action was taken against her, and so she was encouraged to engage in further military action. Mr. Ben Gurion is reported to have told the Israeli State Council that the Israeli victory over the Egyptians was 'a great débacle for United Nations endeavours in Palestine.' More effective than the United Nations' threat of sanctions was a stern note from the State Department of the USA at the end of 1948 informing Israel of America's grave apprehension at her violation of Egyptian territory. When the mediator, Count Bernadotte, was murdered in September 1948 the government of Israel expressed its horror at the assassination, but failed to apprehend the murderers.

The indefatigable efforts and unwearied patience of the acting mediator, Dr. Ralph Bunche, were ultimately crowned with success, and armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab States were signed in 1949 (with Egypt in February; the Lebanon in March; Jordan in April; and Syria in July —Iraq empowering Jordan to act on her behalf). These agreements arranged for demilitarised zones, the withdrawal and reduction of troops, and the return of prisoners of war. Their primary purpose, however, of paving the way for permanent peace has never been achieved. The Arabs consider that a state of war still exists between them and Israel, and an economic boycott has been enforced. On the 1st September 1951 the Security Council called on Egypt to terminate its restrictions on the passage of international shipping through the Suez Canal, as being a contravention of the Suez Canal Agreement which requires that the canal remain open, even in time of war, but Egypt has refused to comply. Inability of the Truce Supervision Organisation to

prevent frontier incidents is too well known to call for comment.

Each side charges the other with the entire responsibility for the absence of peace. The Arabs insist that the United Nations resolutions, and in particular those relating to the refugees, constitute the only possible basis for peace negotiations. Israel replies that these resolutions have failed hitherto to produce a settlement, and contend that they have been outmoded by the great transformations which have changed the face of the Middle East since they were first adopted. Dr. Fadil El Jamali, in December, 1952, retorted that it was the United Nations resolution on Palestine which gave Israel its *raison d'être*. 'If,' he said, 'these resolutions do not stand, then Israel itself cannot legally or morally stand.'

As a matter of fact, each side wishes to pick and choose from among the United Nations resolutions those which it considers should be enforced. Each side accepts or rejects each of these resolutions in the light of its own self-interest. One author, with marked Jewish sympathies, has stated: 'You can almost read the history of Israel in terms of defiance —defiance of the Arab armies; defiance of Truce Commission edicts; defiance of Security Council orders; defiance of General Assembly decisions. Somewhere the process has got to stop.' The record of the Arab States is just as damning.

To credit the statements of the Israeli delegates to the United Nations, the Arabs alone stand in the way of a peaceful settlement. In January 1952 Mr. Eban said: 'Israel's offer in the course of the past three years to negotiate a non-aggression pact or a revision of the armistice agreements, its expressed willingness to discuss the Arab refugee problem, either separately or within the general context of international relations, had met with firm refusal on the part of the Arab governments.' Later, in November 1953, Mr. Eban submitted a letter to the President of the Security Council accusing the Arab States of maintaining a state of belligerency against Israel, carrying on war-like propaganda and threats against her territorial integrity and political independence, and refusing to convert the armistice agreements into a peace treaty. Israel's conception of the terms of a

peace treaty was outlined by Mr. Eban at the United Nations General Assembly in December 1952, and comprised 'non-aggression guarantees and obligations recognising the territorial integrity of each state . . . avoidance of competitive rearmament, elimination of local outbreaks and violence along the frontiers . . . the elimination of de-militarised zones . . . adjustments of territory by suitable exchanges . . . and international co-operation for the solution of the refugee question.'

These proposals serve merely to confirm Arab conviction that Israel desires, at all costs, to keep what she has, whether entitled to it or not. At the United Nations General Assembly of December 1952 Mr. Ahmed Shukairi proposed the establishment by the Palestine Conciliation Commission of three Arab-Israeli Committees to discuss the internationalisation of Jerusalem, the refugee problem, and territorial settlements, on the basis of Assembly resolutions, charter obligations, and the Lausanne Protocol of 1949, but the proposal was not adopted. Dr. Charles Malik, the Lebanese delegate, submitted to the Security Council in October 1953 five conditions for a peaceful settlement: implementation of United Nations resolutions; agreement by Israel to negotiate on the basis of these resolutions; a great-power assurance that territorial encroachment by Israel upon the Arabs will never be allowed; the end of Israel's immigration policy; and international aid to the Arab States. Such conditions Israel would never voluntarily accept, and the Arabs are beginning to despair of any concessions on Israel's part. Indiscreet statements by Jewish leaders leave the impression on Arab minds that the Jews consider it an act of generosity that the Arabs are permitted to own any part of the Holy Land.

So convinced are the Arabs of Israel's unwillingness to negotiate a peace on any terms which they would consider reasonable, that the inevitability of 'a second round' is gaining favour in Arab circles. Israel has been described by Dr. Fadil El Jamali as 'a tumour on the body of the Arab nations', and by General Neguib as 'a cancer endangering all the Arab countries.' After allowing for Arab hyperbole, the impression remains that the Arabs are losing all hopes of

peace by negotiation. The United Nations' failure to take a firm line has served to foster the belief on both sides that all the United Nations recognises is the *fait accompli*. The Arabs have the added stimulus of a deep longing to avenge their defeat, and, with typical oriental patience, they are prepared to await their opportunity.

In these circumstances, for the United Nations General Assembly to persist in repeating its opinion that the responsibility for negotiations rests with the parties chiefly concerned (i.e. Israel and the Arab States) suggests an amazing lack of realism. For either side to put forward a request for negotiations would be immediately interpreted by the other as an admission of weakness. On the 11th December 1948 the United Nations General Assembly set up the Palestine Conciliation Commission with a view to mediating between the two parties, or reconciling their points of view. It was charged with the task of 'assisting the governments directly concerned to achieve a final settlement of all questions outstanding between them.' It attempted to bring the two parties together at a conference at Lausanne in 1949, and at Paris in 1951. The PCC has now itself admitted its complete failure to achieve either mediation or reconciliation. In December 1952 the French delegate on the PCC complained that the Arab States completely ignored it to the point of not even replying to its letters.

There are many reasons for the PCC's dismal failure. One is lack of trust in its impartiality. Dr. Fadil El Jamali pointed out to the United Nations General Assembly in December 1952 that 'The members of the Commission can hardly be separated from the policies of their governments . . . the members of the Commission represent states that do not wish any move on the Palestine issue which disturbs Israel, no matter how just and moral that move might be.' There is a prevailing belief that the Western Powers, in their attitude towards the Palestine problem, are far more concerned about the strategic importance of Jordan and Israel in the event of a third world war than about the rights and wrongs of the case. Another reason for its failure is the publicity which surrounds its sessions. Both parties succumb to the temptation to utilise

the negotiations for propaganda speeches addressed primarily to their respective home constituencies. A third reason is difference of opinion as to whether the PCC was set up to secure the implementation of previous United Nations resolutions, or whether it is entitled to submit its own proposals. A fourth is that, although the PCC expressed its own firm conviction that 'the aspects of the Palestine problem are interrelated . . . and it is desirable that consideration be given to the need for co-ordinating all United Nations efforts aimed at the promotion of stability, security, and peace in Palestine,' nevertheless the United Nations has continued to entrust the task of mediation to the PCC, of supervision of the armistice agreements to the Truce Supervision Organisation and the Mixed Armistice Commission, of care of the refugees to UNRWA, and of economic rehabilitation of the Arab States to the United Nations Technical Assistance Board. Someone has pointed out that the United Nations has appointed more committees on the Palestine question that on any other subject. Not only have the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as five of the United Nations specialised agencies, been concerned with it, but it has also appointed no fewer than ten different committees, or subsidiary organs, to deal with different aspects of the problem.

According to Dr. Fadil El Jamali 'the Palestine question is indivisible', and therefore a piecemeal approach to a settlement is futile. It is only within the compass of an overall settlement that bargaining becomes possible and mutual concessions can be made. The PCC did endeavour to submit proposals for a comprehensive settlement to both sides at the Paris Conference in 1951, but it underestimated the strength of the political claims of the refugees. The Palestine question involves both political and economic issues, and neither can be solved apart from the other. It is a tragedy that the United Nations General Assembly at its last session refused to allow refugee representatives to present their case during the discussion on the future of Palestine. As the Yemenite delegate observed in December 1952: 'In reality the issue to be

settled is not between Israel and the Arab States, but between Israel and the Palestine Arabs.' The Arab States intervened in Palestine, in the first instance, to protect the interests of the refugees: they now appear to be exploiting the refugee problem to further their own interests.

Israel has suggested that negotiations would be more likely to succeed if no third party intervened. Speaking to the Security Council in November 1953 Mr. Eban said: 'Israel's experience has proved that only when talking to its neighbours in the absence of third parties can they talk to each other, whereas with third parties present each side talked to the third party in an effort to gain his belief in the special rectitude or justice of his individual cause.' But the likelihood of such direct negotiations materialising is small in the present electrical atmosphere of the Middle East. Israel would also prefer to deal with each Arab State separately, but the Arab States, with the tacit consent of the United Nations, have stood out for collective negotiations.

Undoubtedly the responsibility for carrying negotiations through to a successful result rests with the United Nations. Having assumed the task of settling the Palestine problem by its decision on partition, it cannot at this stage divest itself of responsibility for the consequences flowing from that decision. Hitherto its policy has been characterised by weakness, improvisation and vacillation. It has been well said that what the United Nations needs is not resolutions, but resolution. No one need be surprised that United Nations stock in the Middle East stands almost at zero. Upon the United Nations rests the obligation to summon the two parties to a peace conference, and, having reviewed the whole situation, to reach, once and for all, decisions which it is prepared to enforce. The partition plan, no matter under what terminology it was enveloped, was itself 'an imposed solution.' Israel has recently called on the Security Council to employ sanctions against Egypt if the latter will not comply with the Security Council's resolutions about the Suez Canal. The United Nations should not hesitate to use sanctions against whichever side refuses to accept the United Nations' final decision on the subjects of repatriation of refugees, territorial

readjustments, the future of Palestine, the internationalisation of Jerusalem, and all other outstanding issues. The financial dependence of Israel on the USA and of Jordan on Great Britain places a powerful weapon in the hands of these two leading members of the United Nations. The objection may be raised that the Arab States will refuse to attend a peace conference if Israel is invited. As, by alphabetical arrangement, the Israeli delegate at the United Nations General Assembly now sits between the delegates from Iraq and the Lebanon, it should not be beyond the powers of the United Nations to secure the attendance of both parties round the same table for a peace conference behind closed doors, especially if it is made clear that the peace conference will take place in any case, whatever the response. An 'imposed solution' might not be altogether unacceptable to statesmen on both sides in coming to terms with their own public opinion, which has been roused to unreasonable expectations.

The hope that time would heal the wounds left by the Palestine war has been belied by the facts. The situation is steadily deteriorating; emotions are becoming more tense, and the attitude of both sides more intransigent. The longer the peace settlement is delayed, the more static the position becomes, and the granting of concessions more difficult. Both sides are incurring heavy financial losses from a delayed peace: Israel by the cutting off of oil supplies from the Haifa refineries and the loss of Arab trade; Iraq by deprivation of the royalties on the pipe line; Jordan by inability to use the facilities of the Haifa Port. Both sides are spending on armaments money urgently needed for economic development. Meanwhile, the physical and psychological condition of the refugees continues to deteriorate, and the danger from the spread of Communist propaganda amongst them increases. Until the Palestine question is settled the Western Powers will be baulked in their efforts to build up a system of Middle East defence. Strain in external relations gives rise to political and economic instability within the Arab countries, reacting in turn upon the economic development of the Middle East at a period when economic advance is a first priority.

There are many problems, some of them economic, which can be satisfactorily dealt with only by co-operative action between the Middle East States, including Israel, such as, for example, the most efficient and equitable use of the waters of the river Jordan. 'Israel,' said Mr. Foster Dulles on his return from a visit to the Middle East in 1953, 'should become part of the Middle East community, and cease to look upon itself, or be looked upon by others, as alien to this community. This is possible. To achieve it will require concessions on the part of both sides. But the gains to both will far outweigh the concessions required to win these gains.' An eloquent appeal for Jewish and Arab co-operation in the development of the Middle East was made by a Jewish ex-serviceman, Uri Avnery, in the magazine *Ere Nouvelle* in March 1953. He wrote: 'It is for us Jews and Arabs to discover afresh our common bonds: the glorious history of our common fatherland, the close relation between our races and languages, our common desire for complete liberty and to trace a new destiny for our great country. For us Jews and Arabs this is what counts; a fusion of those states in which the Semitic languages are spoken from the Nile to the Tigris, in a confederation of nations which guarantees liberty to all its members, not by use of force, nor under any yoke, but by free co-operation.' After all, both peoples are Semitic, and their economies, in the main, complementary. Concessions there must be from both sides, but the main barrier to peace is the complete absence of mutual trust. The objective of the United Nations should be to foster an entirely new mentality. One ground for hope is the fact that the refugees, though the principal sufferers from the Palestine war, show less intransigence towards the State of Israel than the peoples of the Arab States. Having lived with Jews under the mandate they know that mutual co-operation between the Arab States and the State of Israel would be possible to the advantage of both parties. Whereas the Palestine refugees would not be happy to live under Israeli rule, they would be prepared to co-operate with the State of Israel provided they themselves were given some measure of local autonomy.

VI

Agricultural and Industrial Development

ONE of the main Zionist arguments in favour of the permanent resettlement of the Palestine refugees in Arab countries is the existence in the latter of large stretches of cultivable, but undeveloped, land. On the other hand, one of the principal causes of tension between the refugees and the Arabs of neighbouring states is the adverse effect which their intrusion has had on the general standard of living in Middle East countries. What, then, are the facts about Middle East economy? In terms of economic opportunity is there a place for the refugees in the Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, or Iraq?

In the previous chapter the suggestion was made that peace would bring with it the opportunity for Arab and Jewish collaboration in the development of the resources of the Middle East, and that certain aspects of economic advancement, such as the control of water supplies, will elude achievement unless there is a co-ordinated policy. The interest of the United Nations in this field was indicated by the appointment in 1949 of an Economic Survey Mission. Already the financial policies of the Western Powers are linked with those of Middle East countries by the oil industry, by subsidies, and by extensive purchases of cotton and other products. We must, therefore, ask what precisely are the potentialities of agricultural and industrial development in the area, and what is to be the respective contribution towards its attainment by the local states and foreign powers?

Until early in the nineteenth century Middle East economy was based on a self-contained system of subsistence agriculture, supplemented by cottage industries and trade guilds, which were conducted, in the main, along traditional lines

by closed communities. Its methods of agriculture had undergone no radical change since the Middle Ages. The aridity of the Middle East condemned a not inconsiderable proportion of the population to a nomadic existence.

The impact of western economic penetration has changed all this. Today the Middle East is involved in commercial agriculture, and most of its products are sold abroad, thus entangling it in all the fluctuations of world market prices. Cotton is grown in Egypt, Turkey, the Sudan and Syria: olives and oranges in Turkey, Syria, the Lebanon and Israel: tobacco in Turkey and Syria: dates and other fruits in Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Syria and the Lebanon—all largely for export. The process of industrialisation is gaining momentum and threatening the survival of the old cottage industries. No longer is the skill of a special trade the monopoly of a single group. Each year witnesses the transformation of an increasing number of nomads into semi-sedentary, or fully-sedentary, peasants. In the course of a few decades the economy of the Middle East has had to jump from the twelfth to the twentieth century.

Western penetration has done more than merely disturb the balance of the internal economy of the Middle East states. It has had two other results of revolutionary import. By dividing the Middle East, after the first world war, into separate political units, with customs and trade barriers and separate currencies, the Western Powers have multiplied the difficulties, obstructing the most economic and co-operative development of the area's resources; and secondly by relying on the political support of the land-owning and industrial classes, they have deliberately, or inadvertently, accentuated the differences in wealth between them and the masses. Furthermore, conformity to western social and sartorial fashions has brought these differences into the limelight, so that now the under-privileged are more conscious of their poverty and better aware of the extravagance and luxury of the wealthy.

As yet, the bulk of the population is still engaged in agriculture, or in industries directly connected with agriculture, but by western measurements the standard of living

of the peasant classes is deplorably low. With vast stretches covered with desert and with extensive marginal areas between the desert and the sown, which can only be irrigated at enormous cost, the Middle East, on the other hand, contains a number of intensely cultivated and over-populated river valleys. Egypt, with 1,450 persons to the square mile of cultivated land, is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. The annual increase in population throughout the Middle East varies from 1–3 per cent, and outstrips all schemes for increased productivity. The spread of education may ultimately result in a fall in the birth-rate, but at the present time improvements in health services, with the consequent reduction of the death-rate, merely accentuate the economic problem. Fatalism, ignorance, disease, superstition, and innate conservatism, all contribute towards low productivity. The real income of the Egyptian peasant is said to be the lowest in the world. Ill health results in poor output; poor output in reduced earnings; and reduced earnings in malnutrition—and so the vicious circle is completed. Trustworthy calculations show that two-thirds of the population of Egypt live below the subsistence level.

One of the major curses of agriculture in the Middle East is indebtedness. So long as collective forms of land-ownership prevailed, cultivators enjoyed some security, but once the individual cultivator became an owner of his own plot, and was exposed to a market economy, he was driven to borrowing in times of depression. Despite legislative prohibition, exorbitant rates of interest are charged, and only too easily the cultivator may lose the land, cattle, or agricultural implements he has mortgaged. Middle East governments have endeavoured to assist the small farmer by legislation such as the Five Feddan Law in Egypt, by opening Agricultural Credit banks, and by the formation of co-operative societies, but the blight of indebtedness still hangs over the countryside.

The basic reason, however, for the backwardness of peasant farming in the Middle East is the exaction of the landlords. Far too much land is owned by too few big landowners. In Egypt, for example, until recently 94 per cent of

the owners who are small-holders owned only 35 per cent of the land, while 6 per cent owned the remaining 65 per cent. About one and a half million agricultural labourers own no land at all. In Iran 60 per cent of the rural families are landless peasants. The process whereby land-ownership became concentrated in the hands of a small group has been well described by Mr. A. Hourani, in an article on 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East' in the January 1953 issue of *International Affairs*. He writes:

'Through military-service and tax farming, by direct grant or simple seizure, a class of landowners established their claim to a major share in the produce of the soil. In some regions the landowner was also the head of the tribe or a religious community, and there was a moral link between him and the cultivators, but in others the peasant only conceded the landlord's claims under pressure, and ownership carried with it no sense of responsibility.'

The Ottoman Land Law of 1858, which was designed to eliminate intermediaries between the government and the cultivators and so reduce the power of the tribal sheikhs, often had in practice the reverse effect. 'The new land-registration,' writes Mr. Albert Hourani, 'enabled them to extend their holdings by subterfuge (such as that of the Bedouin chiefs in Mesopotamia, who registered the tribal lands in their own names), and at the same time put the whole force of the law behind their claims.' The reasons why the peasants connived at the evasion of the law, and so contributed to their own ultimate loss, are given by Miss Doreen Warriner in her book on *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*. 'The villagers,' she writes, 'fearing that the registration was a preliminary to call-up for military service, or for taxation purposes, falsified the returns, registering the property either in the name of the head of the tribe, or in the name of a member of the family who could not be liable for military service.'

Many Middle East landowners are city dwellers, and take no direct interest in farming, and spend little on long-term agricultural development. Their sole concern is to secure large and quick profits. In Southern Iraq large landowners,

or sheikhs, possess virtually all the land, lending it to share-tenants through a series of intervening lessees. In Syria, vast tracts of land are owned by old families, influential politicians, heads of tribes, or money-lenders. Speculators from Damascus have invested in land in the southern part of East Jordan. By a system of land tenure, which the mandatory powers inherited from the Ottoman Empire, the tenant, whose contract is usually for one year, may be evicted by the landlord without compensation for improvements made, or loss incurred. There is little inducement, therefore, to the tenant to spend money on the land. In any case, many farmers lack the capital required for large-scale improvements. Even when land is held communally it may be redistributed periodically under the Mushaa system, and the individual cultivator has, in consequence, no interest in the permanent development of any particular plot.

Not only do too few landowners own too much land, but they also take too large a proportion of the produce of the soil. Describing the situation in Syria, which is typical of other areas, Miss Warriner writes: 'The villagers bring their corn to the village threshing-floor, and when the grain is threshed, the landlord, or his agent, stands by and takes half of the grain. Towards this result he has contributed nothing; all labour, equipment, seeds, livestock, have been supplied by the tenant, so that his share is rent purely for the use of the land. The landlord is almost always an absentee, a city notable, and only visits the land to collect rent.' If, as in some districts, the tenant provides labour only, and the landowner bears other costs, the latter's share of the produce may rise as high as 80 per cent. In Iraq the cultivator may receive as little as one-seventh, one-fourteenth, or one-twenty-first, of the harvest. A more equitable system of renting land is an urgent necessity.

In spite of the Ottoman Land Law, land titles in most Arab countries, except Egypt and East Jordan, have not yet been determined, so that litigation about ownership and crimes of violence about land are no uncommon occurrence. A land-tenure code is required which will ensure security of tenure, prevent exploitation, and promote investment in the

land. Fragmentation of holdings derived from the Mushaa system, or multiple-ownership of small plots resulting from the Muslim law of inheritance, need to be rectified by a large grouping of holdings with individual ownership. Fragmentation is not only wasteful of the cultivator's time, but impedes the use of machinery, limits irrigation, and prevents proper control of pests and weeds.

The Middle East is now awakening to the fact that to relieve the situation in rural areas, still more drastic measures are needed. Land re-distribution on a broad basis claims first place in any radical policy. In 1953 the Revolutionary Party in Egypt passed a land law limiting holdings to 200 acres (or 300 as a family maximum) and so released for re-distribution about 1,200,000 acres now owned by some 2,000 land-owners. In the course of the next five years between six and seven hundred thousand acres (i.e. about one-tenth of Egyptian cultivated land) is to be re-distributed at a relatively high rate of compensation (ten times the rental value of the land, or seven times the land value as assessed for taxation) to about 150,000 families. The same law contains important provisions for fixing rents and enforcing a minimum wage for agricultural labourers. The interesting feature of this legislation is that it represents an agrarian revolution from above and not from below.

Similar measures, though less drastic in scope, have been adopted in other Middle East countries. In Iraq a law was passed in 1945 authorising the government to distribute state domain among landless peasants in the Dujaylah district. In 1946, and again in 1950 and 1951, the scheme was extended to other areas. Article 22 of the Syrian Constitution of 1950 provides for the encouragement of small and medium holdings; the limitation of the size of holdings but without retroactive effect; an obligation upon owners to keep their land under proper cultivation; and the distribution of land among landless peasants. Decree No. 96 of January 1952 provided for distribution of state domain and the reacquisition of land illegally acquired by feudal lords. In practice, however, the Syrian government is moving slowly in the matter of land reform. In 1949 the government

of Saudi Arabia undertook to give land to any citizen prepared to put it under cultivation. For several decades the late King Abdel Aziz Ibn Saud was engaged in a project of settling nomadic bedouin at oases, or in areas where artesian wells could be built. In the Lebanon, Kamel Jumblatt, the Socialist leader, has been pressing for land re-distribution, and has distributed some of his private estates among his peasants. In Turkey state-owned land is being portioned out to landless peasants or small-holders, but the regulation of 1945 concerning limitation of holdings is not enforced. In Iran a law was passed in 1949 for the sale of all domain land, but little progress can be recorded. In 1951 the Shah ordered the sale of some of his arable farm lands to the peasant cultivators.

In general, the landowners, who constitute the governing class in most Middle East countries, give their whole-hearted support to measures for distributing newly reclaimed land to landless peasants, but they resist with all the resources at their disposal, legislation directed towards the limitation of their own holdings. As the peasants learn from the newspapers and the radio about agrarian revolutions in other countries they are not likely to remain for an indefinite period content with their present state of landlessness, nor will they be duped by promises of political independence. For them, such freedom and independence may mean freedom to starve. Here lies one of the most explosive elements in the present Middle East situation.

Redistribution of wealth in the Middle East will not of itself solve the gigantic economic problems of the area. Increased productivity and the development of all the available resources are equally imperative. In some ways the Middle East is one of the most fruitful regions of the globe. In Egypt the yield per acre of maize and cotton is the highest in the world. In cereals, oils and fats the Middle East is self-supporting. There is a marked contrast between the high productivity of the alluvial deposits of the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates on the one hand, and the barren lands of the Syrian and Arabian deserts on the other. In all areas, however, improvements in methods of agriculture must be

introduced if the standard of living is to be raised. Already many new practices which will increase the yield of arable land are slowly winning their way, such as soil conservation, terracing, ploughing on the contour, control of grazing, the reduction of weeds, seed selection, and better facilities for storage and preservation of crops. Selected stock-breeding can improve the strain of dairy cattle and poultry. Unrestricted goat grazing has, in the past, wrought devastation among young shrubs, while in Ottoman days trees in many areas were cut down to avoid taxation. Afforestation of grazing areas or hilly slopes will help to prevent soil erosion, as well as to conserve moisture and increase the supplies of fuel. The prevailing custom of using animal manure as fuel strikes western minds as wasteful, but experts have reason to doubt whether in the Middle East manure has the same chemical value, owing to the disintegrating effects of the intense sunshine.

In addition to better and more scientific methods of farming, larger areas of land must be brought under cultivation. Recent surveys reveal that in Syria only about one-third, and in Iraq about one-fifth of the total cultivable land is actually being cultivated. By mechanisation the grain-growing area can be extended, the proportion of fallow land reduced, and agricultural pests destroyed. One obstacle, however, is the lack of skilled drivers and proper maintenance. Hundreds of tractors are now lying idle in the fields from want of proper care and attention.

The most effective method of increasing production is by bringing more land under irrigation. This may be accomplished by well-digging or by irrigation schemes. All over the Middle East, especially in Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq, water supplies are being wasted, mainly because of the opposition of vested interests to legislation aimed at fixing water rights. In Iraq valuable irrigated land is being used in an uneconomic way for extensive farming. Several countries have already embarked on large-scale irrigation projects. The Iraq Development Board is utilising a proportion of the oil revenues for improving the systems of irrigation and drainage. Syria is engaged in working out irrigation plans

for the Euphrates area, and also has a scheme for draining the Ghab marshes. Egypt proposes to reclaim 1,800,000 acres, and to convert one million more acres from basin to perennial irrigation. The TVA scheme for the harnessing of the waters of the river Jordan would benefit both Israel and Jordan. Better drainage is essential, especially in Egypt and Iraq, to prevent increasing salinity of the soil.

From this brief survey of Middle East agriculture certain facts stand out clearly. The first is that the primary objective of development projects should be to raise the standard of living of the present cultivators, rather than to provide accommodation for refugees: and secondly, that the increase of production for home consumption should take priority over development for an export market. Unless there is a substantial improvement in the condition of the peasant masses, the Middle East will be ripe for an agrarian revolution. It is a land-hungry area, and the situation resembles in a dangerous way conditions in Russia prior to the Revolution of 1917. A third outstanding fact is the great need for technological training in scientific agriculture. This is being met, to some degree, by local agricultural colleges, and, for more advanced training, by scholarships for study abroad. Fourthly, there is a serious shortage of capital for large-scale improvements in agriculture, and especially in irrigation. Taxation reform can supply a fraction of the money required; oil revenues might provide a larger share; but, in the last resort, the area will have to attract capital from abroad, and this will be no easy achievement so long as the present state of insecurity and political instability continues. One of the ironies of the present situation is that Middle East countries are all dependent upon foreign markets for the sale of their produce, and upon foreign capital for development schemes, and yet most of them are openly hostile to the West, and fear its political and economic penetration.

One indispensable condition of progress is the existence of national governments convinced of the inevitability of radical changes and, at the same time, ready and equipped to carry them out. The present motivation behind agricultural reform may be mixed-national pride, sensitiveness to

foreign criticism, fear of revolution, or genuine interest in the under-privileged. Dr. Fuad Abaza, Head of the Royal Agricultural Society in Egypt, once told a meeting of students in the Faculty of Agriculture in Cairo, that, if for no other reason, they should support agricultural reform as a kind of insurance against the future. Another prerequisite is an upright and technically efficient administration competent to execute the measures proposed by the government, and able to withstand pressure or to refuse bribes from the landowners.

To stand a reasonable chance of success, schemes for extensive irrigation must be carefully planned and co-ordinated, and must command the co-operation of all the states concerned. The Arab League, appreciating the importance of economic co-operation between its members, has appointed a special committee to further this objective. In 1949 an International Islamic Economic Conference was held in Karachi, and the following year in Teheran. It was attended by representatives from Turkey, Iran, and most of the Arab States. Article 7 of the Treaty on Joint Defence and Economic Co-operation between the states of the Arab League, which came into force in April 1952 reads: 'They will undertake to co-operate in the development of their economies and the exploitation of their natural resources, to facilitate the exchange of their respective agricultural and industrial products, and generally to organise and co-ordinate their economic activities.'

Many economic problems, such as locust control, can only be solved satisfactorily by concerted action. Over-population in one country calls for friendly arrangements for large-scale emigration to another undeveloped region. Unless countries with substantial revenues from the oil wells and pipe lines are willing to share their wealth with their poorer neighbours, many useful projects will have to be shelved for lack of capital. The British proposal for the establishment of a Central Bank which would dispose of income from oil on a regional basis failed for political reasons, and any scheme of economic co-operation will have to be founded on, or dovetailed into, plans for political co-operation. The fact is that

the forces of political disunity in the Arab world are still in the ascendant. Syria and the Lebanon, for example, are constantly at loggerheads over their economic relations.

Both Great Britain and the USA have recognized the obligation resting on them, by reason of their political leadership in the Middle East, to co-operate in the economic advancement of the area. Specialists and technicians from the British Middle East Office have been placed at the service of any Middle East government. Jordan is dependent on subsidies and loans from Great Britain to further her development plans, while the Aden area benefits from the British Colonial Development Fund. American money, under Point IV, has been used for economic surveys and pilot projects, and also for the furnishing of advice and help on methods of taxation, agricultural research, public health, education, and sanitation. Turkey, in a period of four years, received $153 million under the Marshall Plan, and still larger sums under the Mutual Security Act, as well as considerable loans from the Export Import Bank, and has devoted the money to modernising the mining industry, opening factories, establishing hydro-electric plants, improving methods of communication, and increasing cotton cultivation.

The Arab States cannot, however, throw off altogether the cloak of suspicion which envelopes all their relations with the Western Powers. They have a constant fear that there may be political strings attached to economic aid. Many have been tempted to pursue a policy of economic nationalism, raising barriers against foreign goods by high tariffs, and against the control by foreign firms of local trade and industry, by such legislation as the Companies Act in Egypt in 1947, and the Syrian Law of 1952 on foreign businessess. There is indeed some justification for defensive measures, as foreign private firms not uncommonly look on the Middle East as a source of raw materials, a market for manufactured products, or a place for profitable investment. Discriminatory practices in favour of the foreign employee as compared with a national naturally stir up ill-feeling, and there is no gainsaying the fact that Arab countries have in the past suffered from economic exploitation by the West.

There is, in general, greater readiness on the part of Middle East States to co-operate with the non-political organisations of the United Nations. These have contributed in no small measure to the encouragement of regional co-operation through, for example, the ILO Conference at Istanbul in 1947, the two conferences arranged by the FAO at Cairo in 1948 and at Beirut in 1949, and the establishment by the WHO of a regional office in Alexandria in 1949. UNICEF has recently agreed to set up a DDT factory in Egypt, and to carry through a milk conservation programme there. Both Turkey and Iraq have received loans from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the International Monetary Fund has explored possibilities of granting financial loans to Middle East countries. Serious deterrents, however, exist in the chaotic monetary conditions in some of these countries, the lack of adequate planning and co-ordination, and the short-term character of many government projects. The Technical Assistance Board is always prepared to consider plans for economic development provided certain basic conditions are fulfilled. One serious danger is that financial assistance from western governments or United Nations sources will be so controlled by the group now holding political power that it will merely further the present advantage of the landowners, and thus accentuate the disparity in the distribution of wealth in the Middle East.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the direct consequences of the involvement of Middle East countries in world trade is their growing consciousness of the importance of industrial development for their economy. They hope thereby both to absorb surplus labour, and at the same time to liberate their countries from dependence on foreign imports, and to increase the national wealth. Most Middle East countries suffer today from a deficit balance in their external trade. The geographical isolation of the Middle East during the second world war stimulated the establishment of a number of local industries,

but of these many proved to be of the mushroom type. With the development of power, through hydro-electric schemes, the availability of oil, and the acquisition of capital from oil resources, prospects for a more consolidated advance are opened up. A less rigid interpretation of the Muslim law on usury encourages Muslims to invest in industry and not exclusively in land and city property.

Many difficulties, however, must still be overcome. The most serious deficiency in the Middle East is that of coal, though the abundance of oil, and of potential hydro-electric power, provide a welcome compensation. The mineral wealth of the area has never been properly prospected, but there is evidence of valuable supplies of iron, copper and chrome in Turkey, of phosphates, manganese and iron in Egypt, and of potash in the Dead Sea area. Israel's resources will be discussed later. There is, however, a serious lack of skilled workmen, trained administrators and competent shop-foremen and field managers. The spirit of ma'lesh ('it doesn't matter') lowers production standards. Manual work is still regarded by most students as degrading, and a large proportion of engineering graduates prefer a 'white-collar' job. The monetary and economic institutions of many Middle East countries are elementary, domestic savings inadequate, and the ambition of most investors is large profits and quick returns. Hitherto, transport facilities have served international rather than local or regional needs. Above all, the prevailing poverty narrows the domestic market, and the low quality of most local manufactures reduces the prospect of sales abroad.

In the early days of western economic penetration, most industry was in the hands of foreigners. Today an increasing number of nationals are entering these fields. In Turkey the state for many years controlled industrial development. Private capitalism was identified with imperialism. The coal mines were nationalised, and the state is still the sole producer of many minerals and manufactured articles. The money required for financing these projects was derived at first from ordinary revenue, and from 1931 onwards also from long-term credits. But in course of time it was realised that state

industries were inefficient. In April 1950 the Industrial Development Bank of Turkey was established for the purpose of financing private industry from long-term loans on moderate rates of interest, and of placing foreign exchange resources at its disposal. State interference with private enterprise has now been greatly curtailed, though government-owned industries still have the advantage as regards access to capital and foreign exchange.

In Iran also most important industrial enterprises are owned and managed by government agencies, and here, too, inefficiency of operation has been demonstrated. One reason for mismanagement has been the intrusion of politics. A seven-year development plan, to be financed from the revenue of the oil industry, was approved by the Maglis (Parliament) in 1949, but was upset by two successive years of drought, and by reactionary financial procedures, so that funds had to be diverted to emergency relief. The dispute over nationalisation with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company finally stymied the plan.

In most other Middle East countries industry has been developed by private initiative, though advocates of nationalisation are not wanting. In Egypt the small Socialist Democratic Party under its leader, Ahmed Hussein, demanded nationalisation of industry, redistribution of wealth, and the introduction of minimum standards of living. Another group, with somewhat similar ideas, was the Socialist Labour Party, whose leader was Prince Abbas Halim. In the Lebanon, Kamel Jumblatt, a Druze, advocates socialism as the application of religion to economic and social life. Already most Middle East governments control the irrigation system, the railways, telecommunications, and half the air lines. Governments also have a controlling interest or share in agricultural, mortgage and industrial banks, and foster as well as supervise the co-operative movement. For the population to depend upon government initiative in these fields is a perfectly natural phenomenon in the Middle East. But the government itself is handicapped by the shortage of trained personnel, and the lack of funds. One of the purposes of the American Fulbright Scheme, of the Mundt-Smith Act,

and of Point IV, was to assist in the training of experts for industry and for government service. But the provision of foreign capital, except for the oil industry, is likely to remain a stumbling-block for some time. Intense nationalism has led to the passing of laws discriminating against foreigners, and these constitute an impediment to the free flow of capital. The general political situation in the Middle East, and the fear of nationalisation of industry, does not encourage private investment.

Wages for skilled and unskilled labour are low, and governments dominated by fear of Communist infiltration view the Trade Union Movement with the utmost suspicion. In Egypt a trade union law was passed in 1942 allowing workers to form organisations and to bargain collectively with employers, but rural labourers were not allowed to establish unions on the grounds that this 'would open the door to Communism.' Trade Unions may only be set up under certain conditions, and with government approval, and organisation of labour on a national scale is forbidden. A so-called Workers' Committee of National Liberation, which dabbled in politics in 1946 and fomented labour troubles, was dissolved. Industrial disputes in Egypt are handled by the Labour Office of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Fearful lest strikes should take a subversive turn, the government usually treats them as seditious and arrests the labour leaders. Further legislation in Egypt includes a law on Conciliation and Arbitration, a law on Labour Contract, and a law of limited scope on Social Insurance. Other Middle East countries are legislating along the same lines, but a truly progressive policy is hardly to be expected so long as political power remains in the hands of a small group of landowners and industrialists. As Mr. A. Hourani has well said: 'At every point social reform depends upon political change.'

VII

Social Reform and Communism

POVERTY is not the only obstacle preventing the underprivileged individual in the Middle East from the enjoyment of an abundant life. Superstition, ignorance and disease are other tyrants holding him in bondage. Newly-independent Arab countries complain that the efforts of the mandatory powers to eradicate these evils were only half-hearted, and they are now trying to catch up with the West in the fields of education, health services, and social welfare. Social services now claim a much larger proportion of Middle East budgets than under the mandatory régime.

The movement for social reform in the Middle East owes its origin almost exclusively to western inspiration. Foreign groups, most of them missionary, first introduced modern education, hospitals, welfare centres, and other forms of social service, into the area. It was from the West that Mohammed Ali invited specialists to set Egypt on the road to progress. It was the West that Ataturk and Riza Shah imitated in their programmes of reform. The idea of the Social Welfare State is today almost axiomatic. But the grinding poverty of the area places a severe limitation on the scope of social action, and the mass of the population is too poor to participate in any contributory insurance schemes. In the past, responsibility for the care of those in need has been shouldered by relatives, or by the religious community to which they belonged. As the concept of the 'Patriarchal' family passed out of fashion, and the idea of the Nation State replaced that of loyalty to the sect, the government was looked on as the fairy godmother whose duty it was to provide all necessary social services. There is undoubtedly a

growing awareness of social need, and a deepening sense of social responsibility in the Middle East, greater perhaps in the small but steadily expanding middle class than among the ruling clique. In one respect the Middle East is favoured, and that is in its almost complete freedom from racial or colour prejudice.

The first aim of the social reformer is to abolish illiteracy, and to this end several governments have enacted legislation making elementary education compulsory. Many years, however, must pass before there will be a sufficient supply of school buildings, or of trained teachers to cope with mass education. Governments are also sponsoring campaigns for adult literacy. The claims of higher education are not neglected, and agricultural, commercial, and industrial colleges have been opened, as well as schools for arts and crafts, teacher-training colleges and universities. The grave danger is that quality of education will not keep pace with its quantitative expansion. The entanglement of education with politics and excessive bureaucratic centralisation have queered the pitch and smothered constructive initiative. The curriculum in most schools is too crowded, the subjects have been divorced from real life, and too much reliance is placed on examinations and memory work. Discipline is notoriously bad. So reactionary is the education in the long-established Muslim religious institutions that Dr. Taha Hussein, the blind Egyptian scholar, once stated that his education only began the day he left El Azhar University for the Sorbonne. Those Middle Easterners who have been privileged to study abroad are more conscious than their fellow-countrymen of the low standards, even of the western type of school.

The second objective is to raise health standards. At the moment health conditions are appalling. Statistics reveal that, on an average, every adult Egyptian is suffering from three major diseases. The very measures taken to increase the country's wealth by extending the area of perennial irrigation have resulted also in a widespread increase in the incidence of bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. Other Middle East countries are plagued by malaria and trachoma. Nothing short of a far-reaching programme of prophylactic measures,

health propaganda, and effective treatment in rural hospitals can cope with so desperate a situation. In Egypt, in 1944, the government passed a Health Statute whose purpose was to provide pure drinking water to the villages, to establish health centres, to help in the eradication of anaemia diseases, to increase the number of hospitals in towns, to extend town drainage, to set up centres for the treatment of tuberculosis and pellagra, and to encourage the draining of marshes.

One major difficulty has been to find the doctors, nurses, and other medical workers, willing to forego the amenities of the town in order to serve in the country where the need is greatest. In the end legislation was passed obliging doctors and pharmacists to work in the villages for two years after graduation. There is also a danger arising from the assumption of some government departments that the mere enactment of a law is in itself a solution to a specific problem; or that the erection of magnificent buildings, or the provision of the most modern equipment, is all that is required. Often the spirit of service is lacking. Peasants are called and treated like 'cattle.' It is little wonder that many pass by the government hospitals (which are nominally free, but where the practice of baksheesh holds sway) in order to attend the foreign hospital where a fee is charged. Another obstacle to progress is the psychology of the lower classes, their conservatism, superstition and fatalism. All disease, they believe, comes from Allah, and if He, in His inscrutable wisdom, decrees restoration to health, scientific treatment in a hospital will make no difference.

The rural social centres, established by the Egyptian government in co-operation with the local communities, promise to pay substantial dividends in better standards of living. A complete team in one of these centres is composed of a young man with agricultural training, a nurse for health and welfare, a full-time doctor, a laboratory assistant, and a club leader. Seldom, however, can a full team be mustered. The centre's programme is designed to influence every aspect of country life through education, recreation, health service, agricultural training, and a co-operative organisation. Each centre has an agricultural demonstration plot with selected

bulls and cocks for improving the strain of local cattle and poultry. Attention is paid to rural and home industries, and there is an out-patients' clinic, a laboratory and a dispensary. Another invaluable form of health service is that provided by infant welfare centres.

The case of Egypt has been cited as typical only: other Middle East countries have their own legislation on health and social services. Turkey, for example, has on her Statute Book some of the most advanced measures of social reform. The training of personnel for education, medical work, welfare, and social services, now occupies a very high place in national programmes. Here is a field in which the Arab nations can learn from one another, as well as from the West. A Seminar on Social Welfare in Arab Countries was held in Damascus in January 1953, and evoked much interest. A number of students of sociology have benefited from advanced courses of study abroad. One common weakness is the concentration of Arab leaders on the practical application of the principles of sociology to conditions in Arab countries rather than on any profound investigation of the principles themselves.

Western countries, with their longer experience and greater wealth, can offer the right hand of partnership to the Arab States in their programmes of social reform, and some are already doing so. Private institutions, missionary and non-missionary, American, British and French, still play an important part in the educational, medical, and social activities of Middle East countries. Private foundations, like the Rockefeller Institute at Sindibis in Egypt, have pioneered in research into health conditions in Middle East villages. Government-aided organisations, like the USIS and the British Council, with their lectures, libraries, film services, and scholarships, add their unique contribution. The non-political organs of the United Nations are finding in the Middle East ample scope for their varied services. Projects of the FAO comprise plans for water control, improvements in transport and communications, schemes for food processing, storage and marketing, and related industrial developments. UNESCO is co-operating with the Egyptian government in

conducting a Training Centre at Sirs El Layan for rural social workers in all Middle East countries, and in setting up at Zeitoun, near Cairo, a centre for experimentation in the rehabilitation of the blind. Nor must the contribution of the British government itself be forgotten in suppressing slavery, in introducing administrative and financial reform, where before there was economic chaos, and in training an efficient Civil Service with high standards of public integrity.

The point at which the West is making its largest single contribution to Middle East development is through the oil industry. The Oil Companies are by far the biggest employers of labour in the Middle East, and they have set a new standard of service for their workers and their dependents by the provision of high wages, short hours, good working conditions, and facilities for hospitalisation and pensions. One Oil Company, in a single year, has spent £4 million on housing its workers, and on medical and educational services. The Oil Companies are, in fact, engaged in social services which should be the prerogative and function of governments. Two temptations ensue: first of excessive paternalism towards their own employees, and second of exerting undue political pressure upon the local government.

The Oil Companies, through royalties, customs dues, and in other ways, provide a substantial part of the money now being spent by Middle East countries on economic development or social improvements. The proportion of the total income of countries like Iraq and Iran, which is derived from oil revenues, may not be so large as that of Bahrein or Kuweit, but without this source of income most of their progressive plans would be held up. Syria and the Lebanon in similar fashion are dependent to an increasing extent on the income from the pipe lines for financing their development schemes. The governing classes in the Middle East are faced with the temptation to use this money, as in Saudi Arabia, for the purchase of luxury cars, or elsewhere to enable the rich to escape taxation, but by and large oil revenues are being devoted to productive purposes. In Saudi Arabia a port is being developed at Dammam on the Persian Gulf, and another at Jedda on the Red Sea. Other items of expenditure

include irrigation projects, the conveyance of water to Jedda, the erection of schools and hospitals, improvements in transport and aviation, the development of dry farming, and in general the strengthening of the authority of the central government. In Iraq 70 per cent of the oil income is invested in the Economic Development Board. Iran spends her oil revenue on her army, and on the seven-year development plan. Kuweit uses hers for the erection of a large freshwater plant, improved sanitation, and the provision of free educational and medical services, while Bahrein is accumulating substantial reserves. Oil production in the Middle East is likely to provide a reliable and steady source of income as the wells are easy to reach, the output large, the costs relatively low, and the oil of high grade.

Once more, however, political tension is in danger of disturbing peaceful economic relations. In June 1946 the members of the Arab League threatened to cancel oil concessions to Great Britain and the USA unless Arab rights in Palestine were respected. Iraq prefers to lose the revenue from the Haifa pipe line rather than permit the flow of oil to Israel. Iran, with disastrous results to her own economy, nationalised the oil industry in 1951. The Arab States are continually pressing their demands for a larger share of oil royalties, and soon the limit may be reached. Iran's recent experience has demonstrated the fact that many years must elapse before the Middle East States will have national experts with sufficient technical training and practice to qualify them to administer the industry.

COMMUNISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

This brief survey has disclosed the depressing conditions under which the masses of peasants and labourers live and work in the Middle East. Housing, especially in Egypt and Iraq, is bad; disease is endemic; agriculture suffers from a feudal system of land tenure; the majority of the population is illiterate. Middle East governments are aware of the pressing need for improvements, and have begun to initiate schemes of development and reform. But in the opinion of

those who have heard of revolutionary changes in other lands, the measures the governments are taking appear only as palliatives. Only too often in the past politicians have diverted attention from the urgent need for internal reform to the nationalist struggle against western 'imperialism'. Only too often promises of far-reaching reforms have been scattered over electioneering programmes and speeches at the opening of Parliament, but in practice little has been achieved. Men and women are now coming to the conclusion that what is needed is a radical overhaul of the whole economic and social system. For those who lean towards a revolutionary programme Communism offers many attractions.

Communist propaganda receives a ready hearing amongst university students who are disgruntled at the incompetence and selfishness of the professional politicians, among low-paid workers, and among dissatisfied clerks and civil servants. There is evidence, also, of Communist infiltration into the trade unions, the police, the army, the Muslim Brotherhood, El Azhar University, and the camps for Palestine refugees. Whereas twenty years ago lavish displays of extravagance in a city like Cairo were greeted with amazement and awe, today they only provoke protests and imprecations. The sudden outburst of the 26th January 1952, when some seven hundred shops and business premises in Cairo were set on fire in the space of a few hours, is one indication of the pent-up bitterness of the common people. As yet Communism does not appear to have taken hold in the villages, where the social integration of Islamic society still obtains, and where its spread would be most dangerous. Yet, of the students in Egypt the London *Times* has written 'they are excellent instruments of nation-wide propaganda, since they come from every village, and their education commands the attention of the simple, illiterate country-folk.' The spread of Communism in the Middle East does not rely so much on the propagation of Communist doctrine as on appeals to disgruntled elements. Communal grievances and the complaints of minority groups are exploited, as well as national resentment at the political policy of the Western Powers. The USSR and

the Russian Church are prepared to defend the interests of the Greek Orthodox Church in Muslim lands, and an appeal has been made to the Armenian Christian minority to return to Soviet Armenia.

Middle East governments are terrified at the thought of a Communist revolution, and most of them have enacted legislation for its suppression. They realise that, in the event of a revolution, the class to which they belong would be the first to be liquidated. The only result, however, has been to drive the movement underground. Evidence of secret cells has been unearthed in the Gaza area, in Egypt, and in many parts of Jordan. The Communist Party is officially recognised in Israel, in Iran (the Tudeh Party), and in the Lebanon, which is said to be the base for Communist propaganda in the Middle East.

Even, however, if there were no active Communist intervention in the Middle East, conditions, by contrast with the West, are such as to generate a spontaneous protest against feudal landlordism and industrial exploitation. If economic development and social reform are not speeded up, and drastic measures taken to raise living standards and ensure a fairer distribution of wealth, an explosive situation will inevitably arise. At this point two considerations of some importance must be faced. The first is a religious question. Are Islam and Communism so incompatible in their basic principles that a Communist revolution in the Middle East may be ruled out as highly improbable? The other is a political problem. Is there any reasonable chance of so radical a change in the political structure of Middle East countries as to effect the transfer within a limited period of time of political power from the small group now in control to the mass of the population? To both questions we must address ourselves in the next chapter.

VIII

The Nation-State, Islam and the Minorities

IN no area of life has the impact of the West upon the Middle East produced more revolutionary changes than in its political thinking. From the French Revolution were derived, early in the nineteenth century, the concepts of democracy and the natural liberty of the individual. From Great Britain came the idea of the superiority of parliamentary over all other forms of government. From Hegelianism, and similar sources, stemmed the doctrine of the nation-state. At every point these notions stood out in stark contrast against both political conditions in the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, and the orthodox Islamic concept of the 'House of Islam' ruled by a caliph whose function it was to enforce the divine law (the Sharia) with the help and advice of the Islamic lawyers, doctors and counsellors, at the head of whom stood the Mufti (supreme counsellor). Between these two fundamentally different conceptions of political philosophy a struggle has been going on for more than one hundred years, and the issue is by no means settled yet.

Middle East reaction to western political theory has ranged all the way from outright rejection to unqualified acceptance. Puritanical Islamic sects, like the Wahhabis, the Senussis, the Idrissis and the Mahdists, stubbornly resisted western political penetration in all its forms, theoretical and practical, and came 'charging out of the desert on God's path against apostate Muslims' who, to their fanatical eyes, had betrayed Islam by going the western way. The more sophisticated Muslims followed the lead of Sayyid Jemal Ed Din El Afghani in demanding the independence from western rule

of all Muslim States as an essential pre-condition of an Islamic revival under a universally acknowledged caliph.

At the other extreme stood men like Ataturk and Riza Shah, who looked on the Islamic religious leaders (the Mullahs) as the incarnation of every reactionary tendency, and insisted on the disestablishment of Islam and the relegation of religion to the sphere of private devotions, so that there might be no hindrance to the whole-hearted adoption of western political institutions. In 1924 Turkey abolished the caliphate, and there is little chance of its revival. The Sharia Law was replaced by a Civil Code based on that of Switzerland, while in Iran its competence was seriously curtailed. A Turkish writer has recently claimed that the Turkish Republic 'has never ceased to declare itself a citadel of scientific positivism and of the positivist school of thought. The entire mechanism of the state by common accord has been trying to put into the different institutions the positivist formula—the Good, the Beautiful and the True—as new doctrine.' This trend came more naturally to non-Arab peoples, like the Turks and the Persians, who could cast their minds back to a pre-Islamic culture, but even they in recent years have sensed the need for some spiritual force to fill the vacuum created by the deposition of Islam from its ascendancy in educational institutions and political life. Though the Turkish State is still secular and laic, some of the restrictions on Islamic teaching and practice have been lifted. In two Arab countries, Syria and Egypt, the proposal to disestablish Islam has been mooted, but has not yet commanded popular approval.

The majority of political thinkers in the Middle East have sought to find a *via media*, and to discover a formula for the reconciliation of their Islamic faith with democratic ideals. Islam, they claim, is itself essentially democratic. Islamic jurisprudence may, in the past, have enjoined submission to tyranny on the principle that any form of orderly government is preferable to anarchy, but this was, they say, merely a concession to the exigencies of a despotic caliphate. In early Islam may be discerned elements which were truly democratic—the equality of all men before God, and therefore

before the law; the appointment of the caliph by popular acclamation, and the freedom of Muslim society from stratification. In those days Islam, religion, community and state were all one, and the government existed to promote the well-being of the whole community. By means of the institution called Beit El Mal (the Common Treasury) it supplied the needs of those in want. Almsgiving, and later the system of religious endowments and the Dervish Orders, helped to bind the community together. The framers of the Constitution of Pakistan are now working, as the London *Times* expressed it, on the assumption that 'there is no incompatibility between the principles of Islam and the practice of a modern welfare state.'

In most Middle East countries democratic institutions are now recognised as an indispensable concomitant of civilisation and progress. Though the idea of a federation of Islamic States still exerts a magnetic influence, the possibility of a single Muslim Empire may be ruled out once and for all. The Nation-State has come to stay. In place of an autocratic caliphate, ruling through a number of viziers (governors) under a bureaucratic centralised system of government, parliamentary procedures have been adopted, based on the principle of the derivation of authority from the people, to whom the government must render an account of its stewardship. Certain conservative Islamic groups still advocate the resuscitation of the Sharia Law as the basis of legislation in Muslim lands, and in some constitutions, like that of Syria, the Sharia is officially recognised as one of the principal sources of jurisprudence, but the western codes adopted during the nineteenth century, and modelled mainly on the French Napoleonic Code, are not likely to be discarded. The western concept of the function of government as the protection of the rights of the individual within the community is gradually replacing the more totalitarian Muslim doctrine that the first responsibility of the state is the protection of the Muslim community against attacks from within and without. Personal rights have been given clear and precise definition in an elaborate constitution copied in the main from the most advanced constitutions of the West.

Few people, however, with any intimate knowledge of the Middle East would venture to claim that in practice the systems of democracy, personal liberty and parliamentary government, are working smoothly. In the first place, these political forms and institutions do not represent a natural evolution, except, possibly, in Turkey and Iran, where constitutional government was only secured after a prolonged struggle. Even in Turkey, Ataturk was obliged to govern the country for the best part of a quarter of a century by means of a One-Party system. The outward forms of democracy exist, rather than the inward spirit. Parliamentary elections are usually rigged, or conducted in an atmosphere of violence —the election in Turkey in May 1950 being a notable exception. India's experience has proved that an illiterate electorate can vote intelligently, but in the Middle East ignorance and passions sway the emotions of the masses. There is more demagogy than democracy. Political parties centre around personalities rather than principles. Indeed, most political leaders are drawn from one group only—that of the landowners, industrialists, tribal sheikhs and professional men, and only occasionally from prosperous members of the middle classes. Such men are chiefly concerned to feather their own nests, and to conserve the interests of their own group. The forms of government may have changed, but there has been no corresponding change of heart. The support given by many Arab leaders to the movement for Arab independence would appear to have been prompted in no small measure by their personal ambition to replace the Turkish pashas as despoilers of the lower classes. This fact lends some justification to the scepticism of certain western diplomats regarding the sincerity and disinterestedness of Arab political leadership.

Standards of political morality are disappointingly low. Vituperation takes the place of constructive criticism, and governments are unseated by artificially fomented disturbances and student strikes. One political party outbids another for popular support by extreme nationalist demands; public statements rarely express inward conviction and irresponsibility characterises much political action. The instability of

Middle East governments may be illustrated by the experience of Iraq which, between 1921 and 1936, had no fewer than thirty-six governments. Political opponents do not refrain from resorting to violence. In the space of six years as many as thirteen rulers, or political leaders, were assassinated. Governments retaliate by declaring a state of emergency, by imposing imprisonment or banishment, or by enforcing a strict censorship. The ample provisions for personal freedom embodied in the Constitution may easily be neutralised by a corrupt judiciary or an unscrupulous administration.

A younger generation is growing up in the Middle East which is utterly dissatisfied with the lack of constructive statesmanship among the senior politicians. Their criticisms are scathing and unsparing. Ministers, they say, lack specialised training in the departments for which they assume responsibility. The first step of many a minister on entering office is automatically to reverse the decisions of his predecessor. The only continuity in administration is derived from the faithful service of the junior clerks. Senior officials are appointed by the party in power and change with each government. Many administrative appointments are secured by nepotism or the intervention of an influential friend. Political power is used unashamedly to further the interests of supporters, and to penalise opponents. The bureaucratic tradition still survives, creating a bottle-neck at the top and crushing initiative and responsibility at a lower level. The public has little faith in the integrity of the government, and yet does not possess sufficient power to impose its wishes on it.

No endeavour is made in Middle East circles to cloak the mounting dissatisfaction of the community with the corruption and incompetence of the professional politicians. Men cast their minds in different directions in search of a way of escape from the present impasse, and three lines of action are presented to them. Muslim reformers and reactionaries, distressed at the degradation of standards of private and public conduct in the Middle East, are convinced that the only solution lies in a return to primitive Islam so that law, morality and society may be unified on an Islamic basis.

This recall to Islam is prompted as much by political as by religious motivation. Disappointment at western policy and dissatisfaction with western opposition to the Nationalist Movement created by reaction a sense of need to discover in Islam itself and in the past traditions and glory of Arab culture a centre of resistance against further western penetration. Islam, being an all-comprehensive system of religious, ethical, social, legal and political institutions, offers cover under its spacious wings for political and religious movements alike, and usually no distinction is drawn between the two. During the past three decades numerous groups shot up, like the Friends of Mohammed, the Lovers of the Koran, and the Young Men's Muslim Association. Of this type also were the Tidjani Movement in Turkey, which the government recently suppressed, and the Kashanix and the Fida'iyan-I-Islam Parties in Iran. But the most powerful reactionary group in the Middle East is the Muslim Brotherhood, which has been described as a 'neo-Islamic totalitarianism', and whose objective has been expounded recently by one of its leaders in the following terms: 'An authority entirely Islamic for the life of the individual as for the life of the family, of society and of the nation, *that* is the supreme aim towards which the Muslim Brotherhood progresses.' It is a body which would capitalise religious zeal for political ends, and which is prepared to seize power by every means at its disposal, be it intimidation, intrigue, or ruthless force.

A second group comprises exponents of the Communist school of thought. They hold that Communism alone can purge the Middle East of its present corrupt rulers, and engineer the economic and social revolution which the area so desperately needs. The common conception that because Communist atheism and Islamic belief in the all-powerful will of God are incompatible, or because the Communist doctrine of history as a dynamic process conflicts with the Islamic view of reality as static and atomistic, therefore Communism cannot take hold in Muslim countries, is founded on a grave misreading of the situation. The analysis made by Mr. A. Hourani is more to the point: 'Communism can spread among those on whom the inherited religion has

lost its hold, and it can spread even within the framework of Islam. It is quite compatible with vague "religiosity"—Muslim no less than Christian—and its conception of society has points in common with that of Islam. Both are conceptions of a universal society based on equality, and striving towards social justice; both think of reform in terms of cataclysm, the sudden change which will make all things new; in both social idealism goes together with moral protest against the laxity of the world.'

Other characteristic features common to both systems have been noted by writers on the Middle East situation—their totalitarian doctrine, their fanaticism and collectivism, their division of the world into two sectors, their sense of mission, their concept of a community of believers which is always in the right, and finally their dependence on the state to control economic life. In the opinion of Dr. Charles Malik, the supra-nationalism of the Soviet Union may still appeal to a region which has known imperial existence far more than nationalistic fragmentation, and Communist universalism, especially in regard to race and culture, may strike a responsive note in the heart of a region whose highest creations have always been in the form of spiritual and human universalism. Professor Toynbee compares Communism with primitive Islam as a reforming heresy aimed at correcting the abuses of a contemporary conservative society. Arab intellectuals may readily accept Marxism as both an explanation of present trends and a guide for future action. Communism makes a powerful appeal by its intense anti-western sentiment and its opposition to colonialism, and to race and colour prejudice.

The third method of crippling the power of the self-centred political parties is by the intervention of the army. In Syria and Egypt the army has taken control and the old political parties have been abolished. The first step in each case was to remove from office a corrupt administration. The Revolutionary Party in Egypt eliminated the unsavoury Palace régime, as well as the opportunist Wafdist Party. It tried to introduce a new spirit into politics by taking as its motto the aims of 'Unity, Work and Discipline'. Behind these moves lay

the desire of the military to recover the prestige lost by the débacle of the Palestine war. In Iraq there was a military coup d'état in 1936 which lasted one year, and every government from that date until 1941 was formed under army influence. But one coup d'état leads to another, and army dictatorship may end by being not only undemocratic, but also corrupt. It has been said that nationalism in the Middle East passes through three stages. First a struggle for independence, then the establishment of an independent state with parliamentary forms, and finally a dictatorship. If true, this third stage would represent a reversion to that kind of government which was common in the Middle East before western influences made their mark, and would correspond with Ottoman or Mameluke régimes where power was vested in a bureaucracy, an army, and a religious hierarchy. The religious hierarchy may now be replaced by a Communist commissar or a dictatorship, military or civilian; otherwise the political structure is the same with power vested in an individual or a clique supported by the army and a group of loyal officials.

There still remains, however, a fourth group, composed for the most part of younger men who have enjoyed the benefit of a western education in some higher educational institution in the Middle East, or some foreign university, who still have faith in democracy and do not wish to be drawn into any form of totalitarian régime, be it Islamic, Communist or military. It is not so much, in their opinion, that democracy has been tried in the Middle East and found wanting, as that it has not really been tried at all. They have the support of the unofficial democracy of the coffee house, the bazaar and the market-place, and the common people are beginning slowly but steadily to realise the power which the vote has put in their hands. As women's suffrage spreads, a more democratic spirit may be evinced. Public opinion in the Lebanon was strong enough in September 1952 to secure by peaceful pressure the resignation of the President, Bishara El Khouri, who was associated in the popular mind with the ineptitude and corruption of the previous régime, and his replacement by a man of character, Kamil Sham'oun. The

more progressive Arab leaders, like Musa Alami and Costi Zurayk, are clamouring for a purging and modernising of the administration in the Middle East, if only to strengthen the influence of the Arab States in the struggle against Zionism. But the mistake must not be made of assuming that democracy in the Middle East must be identified with those particular parliamentary institutions which western nations evolved after centuries of political struggle against kings and barons. The possibility must not be excluded of a different type of democracy emerging, which conforms more appropriately to the stage of political development which Middle East countries have now reached.

Meanwhile, these four groups—the democratic, the Islamic reactionary, the Communist, and the military—form a quadrilateral within which a tense struggle for power is now proceeding. A sharp line of demarcation cannot in all cases be drawn between one group and another. Various combinations are formed, usually of a transient nature. It is this situation which accounts for so much of the political instability of the Middle East in recent years. First one group and then another gains temporary ascendancy: no one can foretell which will ultimately gain the upper hand. The present period of flux and transition may continue for some time. In countries which still retain kingship, a strong personality on the throne may, by statesmanlike leadership, promote political stability, but a weak or self-centred monarch merely adds one more focal point of disunity.

THE NATION-STATE

Another western concept which has had dynamic effects on Middle East thought is that of the nation-state. In the first chapter we observed the emotional force of nationalism in its struggle for independence and self-expression, as against the imperial claims of the effete Ottoman Empire or the mandates of the Western Powers. In this chapter we shall examine its bearing on the internal structure of the Middle East States. With the same resolution with which they opposed submission to an external foreign power, these states

struggled to throw off the yoke of the 'capitulations' in their internal legal system. In all Middle East countries the capitulations have now been abolished, either by unilateral action, or by mutual agreement. Divisive forces deriving from tribalism or sectarianism are anathema as they fly in the face of the ideal of a unified national consciousness.

In many respects the concept of the nation-state as composed of citizens sharing the same culture, the same language, and the same historical traditions, differs radically from that of the orthodox Muslim State in which an elect majority, the community of believers, holds a position of superiority in every department of public life over the protected groups of non-Muslims, be they Christians or Jews. Each non-Muslim community was organised under what is known as the 'millet' system as a more or less self-contained entity, under the leadership of its spiritual head, who was responsible to the caliph, or Muslim ruler, for its administration, the good conduct of its members, and, at one time, for the payment of taxes. Law in such a Muslim State was primarily personal not territorial, religious not secular. All questions of personal status for non-Muslims, such as marriage, divorce, alimony, guardianship, successions, and testaments, were decided by Community Courts whose judgments were executed by the civil authorities. Community Councils were responsible for all ecclesiastical matters, such as the administration of religious endowments, the control of church property, the oversight of community schools, and the supervision of the clergy. Christians and Jews were assured security of person, together with certain specified rights embodied in tradition, and in guarantees dating back to the early days of Islam, as well as by definite undertakings given under western pressure by the Sublime Porte in the nineteenth century, such as the Gulhayne Decrees of 1839, the Hatti Himayun of 1856, and the Constitution of 1876.

The effect of nationalism on the political, economic and social status of non-Muslim minorities in the Middle East depends today upon whether it is founded on democratic principles or on some doctrine of religious, racial or cultural homogeneity. The underlying motif of the modern

democratic state is the equality of all citizens before the law, irrespective of race, religion, colour, class, or sex, and equal opportunity for everyone in the fields of politics, economics and social advancement. Where this ideal fashions popular thought, and where constitutional guarantees of personal liberty command the support of the administration, the legal system and popular opinion, the status of the Christian or Jewish minority is revolutionised. Complications, however, arise when the same constitution which safeguards personal freedom contains an Article declaring that: 'The religion of the State is Islam.' This Article is used as a peg on which to hang all sorts of discriminatory measures against the non-Muslim minority.

When the state is monolithic, and nationalism and religion are identified, as has happened in Egypt in recent years, the position of minorities is worsened rather than improved. Minorities are accused of introducing an element of discordance and so of weakness into the body politic. The same result ensues when the state is secularised but builds up its inner life on a theory of racial or cultural uniformity. Minorities differing in race or culture from the majority are then subjected to social and economic discrimination, as has been the case in Turkey, and they can only escape from their disabilities by a process of assimilation to the majority.

This problem of minority status concerns Islamic sects which differ in doctrine or race from the dominating group, as well as the Christian or Jewish communities, some of which differ in race and language, in addition to religion, from the Muslim majority. Large-scale migrations of population, and bitter religious controversies have studded the Middle East with larger or smaller pockets of minority groups, many of which have found refuge in the mountain fastnesses of Syria and the Lebanon.

The past history of Islam is stained with many a bloody struggle between the Sunnis and the Shi'is (the two major divisions within the Islamic community), and between them and the other more or less heterodox Islamic sects, such as the Alawis (or Nusairis), the Isma'ilis, the Druzes, the Yazidis, and the Baha'is. Intercommunity relations still constitute a

frequent source of friction in the two Islamic countries of Syria and Iraq, as well as in the Christian country of the Lebanon. Responsibility for the sectarian divisiveness of Syria and the Lebanon is laid, with some justification, at the door of French policy under the mandatory régime. In Iraq, which was an artificial amalgamation of three Ottoman provinces, the Shi'is still feel that they do not have a fair share of the government. In all three countries the authorities are seeking to foster a national consciousness which will penetrate deeper than existing religious loyalties.

Other Islamic communities, like the Kurds, the Circassians, and the Turcomans, share the same doctrinal beliefs as the Arab majority, but differ from it in race and language. Though Islam is creditably devoid of race prejudice, the Kurds have suffered from the cruel repressive policy of Turkish nationalism, so that thousands had to flee for refuge to Syria; they have also been the victims of economic and administrative neglect in Iraq. The Circassians in Syria and Jordan complain that they are still made to feel that they are intruders. The Turcomans present no special problem because they are largely Arabised.

In spite of the claims of most Middle East States to the title of democracy, and in spite of the liberal terms of their constitutions, the non-Muslim minorities are still subjected to many disabilities. Religious freedom is guaranteed to them, but in practice this means only freedom of worship. The right to evangelise is curtailed on the grounds that it contravenes good morals and public order. Nothing excites the fanaticism of the Muslim masses more than the word 'tabsheer' (that is, the preaching of the Gospel) or rumours that a Muslim has been baptised. In the debate on Human Rights at the third session of the United Nations General Assembly, Pakistan was the only Muslim power which stood out uncompromisingly for full freedom for Christian missionary work. 'Islam,' said its delegate, 'is a missionary religion. It claims the right and the freedom to persuade any man to change his faith and accept Islam. Surely and obviously it must equally yield to other faiths the free right of conversion. There cannot be any doubt on that point. It would be most

unreasonable to claim the right of conversion and to deny it to others.' The Egyptian delegate, on the other hand, backed by most of the other Muslim delegates, sought at first the deletion of the phrase 'freedom to change' religion or belief, from the Article in the draft Covenant on Human Rights, and later pressed for the insertion of the words 'without constraint or influence affecting the free will,' as a limitation on freedom to change one's faith. In the end a wording was selected which satisfied Muslim objections. It reads: 'No one shall be subjected to coercion which would impair his freedom to maintain or to change his religion or belief.'

The only Middle East countries which have enacted procedures for registering a change of faith to Christianity from Islam are the Sudan, Iraq and the Lebanon, but in practice administrative obstacles make recourse to them supremely difficult. The legal status of a convert and his family is, in most cases, undetermined. The convert's life is in danger, and Muslim law requires that he be disinherited. He often loses his employment and his wife and children are usually separated from him. A woman convert is subject to the Muslim law of guardianship, which, if applied, means that she is placed under the control of her nearest Muslim male relative until she has passed the age of marriage. Pressure is often put on her to marry a Muslim. In the eyes of the Muslim public the apostate is a traitor both to his religion and to his community, and deserves all that comes to him. The nationalist spirit has not yet succeeded in creating an atmosphere congenial to the full exercise of religious freedom.

One other form of religious disability is the series of administrative restrictions imposed on non-Muslims before permission is granted for the erection of a place of worship. Regulations of this kind (e.g. that the proposed church must not be near a Muslim cemetery or mosque or sheikh's tomb), open the door to petty vindictiveness on the part of an illiberal Muslim official. The strictness with which these regulations are applied varies from one régime to another, or from one official to another. It is the element of discrimination involved that the minorities most resent, inasmuch as similar regulations do not apply to the erection of a mosque.

The presence of a multiplicity of Community Courts of Personal Status is naturally abhorrent to advocates of national unity, and the conflict of judgments which the existing system often entails creates a whole series of problems. In some countries a Court of Conflicts has been set up to decide the competence of competing jurisdictions. Christians who have drifted away from religion also dislike the system, as they resent having to submit their private affairs to the decision of Ecclesiastical Courts. Turkey cut the Gordian Knot by abolishing the 'millet' system altogether: other governments have introduced legislation with a view to reducing the number of Community Courts, co-ordinating their legal procedures, and curtailing their powers. All such proposals have generally been resisted with the utmost vigour by the non-Muslim minorities who cling tenaciously to their traditional privileges. They fear that to yield at one point is to surrender all. In the eyes of many Christian communities marriage is a sacrament, and they object to the submission of legal issues arising therefrom to courts on which sit Muslim judges. Individual Christians would not raise objections if only similar limitations were applied to the Muslim Courts of Personal Status, or if, as in Turkey, all questions of personal status for all citizens were brought under a secularised civil law. So long, however, as minorities are animated by a spirit of communalism and insist on maintaining a separate and exclusive existence, the achievement of a truly democratic state, unified on a basis of nationalism, is impossible.

At one time almost all education was provided by the various communities for their own members, but nationalism requires the existence of a state-administered system of schools which will promote a national spirit. Non-Muslim minorities are still allowed to conduct their own schools, provided they conform to general educational regulations. It is a common procedure now for Middle East countries to insist not only upon the teaching of the Arabic language, history, geography, and civics in all schools, but that the teacher of these subjects (who in certain areas is appointed by the government) must be a national, and possibly a

Muslim. Permission is usually given to Christian schools to provide religious instruction for children belonging to their own community, but it is illegal (e.g. in Egypt) for them to give Christian teaching to Muslims, or even, in some countries, to Christian children of other denominations. This prohibition is founded on the belief that it is the duty of the Muslim State to protect its children against those who would exploit their immaturity. Ethical instruction, including Christian precepts, is the maximum allowed for Muslim pupils in Christian schools. At one time a Conscience Clause was permitted, but this is rarely the case now. Pressure is also exercised through legislation, or administrative action, upon Christian schools to provide Muslim teaching and a place of prayer for their Muslim pupils. There are Christians, especially those who fear the spread of Communism, who concur with this policy under the conviction that any religious instruction is better than none: others refuse for conscience's sake, and usually follow one of four courses—the total exclusion of Muslim pupils; their release at specified hours for Islamic instruction elsewhere; the acceptance from the Muslim parent of an undertaking to provide privately the required religious teaching; or the closure of the school.

Though in Egypt a child is now forbidden by law to receive instruction in a religion other than his own, nevertheless Christian children in government elementary schools are commonly induced to attend Islamic lessons on the plea that their knowledge of Arabic will benefit. Facilities for Christian children in such schools to be taught their own faith are either non-existent, or are subject to such limitations as to render them nugatory. In consequence, Christian communities have been obliged to incur the additional expense of providing their own schools. In recent months the Egyptian government has indicated its intention of insisting on the instruction of all children, Muslim or Christian, in their own faith.

In other spheres of life discrimination is often the lot of the non-Muslim minority. Christians receive unequal treatment in such matters as personal security, assessment of taxation, the granting of nationality, the use of the radio for religious

services, the application of administrative regulations to Christian institutions, and the appointment, location and promotion of government officials. Christians are debarred (e.g. in Egypt) from some of the higher ranks of the Civil Service, and the number of appointments allowed them is, in some countries, limited to their proportion of the total population. The law in Egypt about the employment of nationals in commercial firms is interpreted in such a way as to identify an Egyptian with a Muslim. No Christian or Jewish man may marry a Muslim girl, though a Muslim is allowed to marry a Christian or a Jewish girl. The enforcement of the restrictions enumerated above is intensified in their application to minorities associated with foreign Christian missions, or to those Christian groups like the Assyrians or Armenians who differ from the majority in race and language, as well as in religion.

Neither democratic constitutions nor nationalist ideals have succeeded, as yet, in breaking down the wall of partition between the Muslim and the non-Muslim communities. The problem of the protection of minorities in the Middle East is complicated and delicate. Reversion to the system which obtained under the Ottoman régime of protection by a foreign power (e.g. the Roman Catholics by France, Italy or Austria; the Greek Orthodox by Russia, and the Protestants by the USA or Great Britain) is out of the question, though the Soviet Union has in recent months given concrete evidence of readiness to intervene on behalf of the Greek Orthodox. In Middle East countries the memory is still fresh of the dependence of minorities upon the aid of foreign powers, and the abuse by those powers of the right of protection so as to interfere in the internal affairs of the state. There are certain minorities, among them the Maronites, who look back with nostalgia to those halcyon days, but it is an injudicious and slippery course to follow. The provisions for the protection of minorities laid down by the mandates were equally galling to Middle East countries, as the guarantees required were not demanded of all states. The method of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the draft Covenant of Human Rights, offers a less offensive procedure.

But the draft Covenant at present lacks teeth with which to ensure the prevention of infringements, and there is no guarantee that the Muslim States will ratify it.

To satisfy minority sentiments, and to afford official expression to minority opinion, some Middle East States (e.g. Jordan, the Lebanon, Syria and Iraq) provide for the direct representation of recognised minority groups in parliament, while in the Lebanon most important administrative appointments are made on a communal basis. By these measures minorities can participate in the government, and voice their grievances, but the sense of communal separateness may only become thereby more firmly entrenched.

Constitutional guarantees set a standard for a more liberal policy, but, as we have had occasion to observe, they may easily be nullified by administrative or judicial partiality, or by the fanaticism of popular emotion. The indirect pressure arising from economic or social discrimination may, in the end, prove more effective and more objectionable than direct legislation. In Egypt hundreds of Christians become Muslims every year for the sake of a marriage, a divorce, a monetary gift, a commercial advantage, or an offer of employment. The omnipresent Islamic environment so envelops the life of the Christian minority that it promotes assimilation to the Muslim population, especially in isolated villages where the same customs, ceremonies, practices, and superstitions are shared by the two communities.

Dissatisfaction with existing conditions has encouraged certain minority groups to cherish the hope of independence or autonomy, and in particular compact minority communities differing in race, religion and language from the Muslims around them, but nationalist Muslims are reluctant to recognise the nationalist claims of minority groups. The only really effective and permanent solution to this problem lies in such a change in the spirit of Islam as will permit the evolution of a multi-religious society, unified by a common loyalty to a democratic ideal. This thought has been succinctly expressed by Mr. A. Hourani: 'The whole future development of the Arab countries,' he writes, 'depends on a change in the spirit of Islam, not its theoretical formulations

but the living creative spirit which moulds the life of the Islamic community.' This change of spirit will only be realised after a long process of self-education and still larger doses of western democratic thought. Hitherto Christians and Muslims have united on the political plane in times of national crisis in opposing western control or Zionist policy. But the compact has usually broken down as soon as the crisis is past. General Neguib has recently sought to win the co-operation of the numerous minority groups in Egypt in the struggle against Great Britain by visiting their places of worship, and by such statements as: 'Minorities are precious things. They are like salt in food.' Or again: 'Religion is for God and the Fatherland for all citizens.' In spite of these advances Christians continue to experience discriminatory action in routine administrative matters from government officials.

Certain factors are helping to demolish the age-long barriers between the different religious communities. Improved communications and the expansion of industry bring Christians and Muslims together at the same bench in urban workshops and factories. Children from both communities attend the same schools and learn to study and play together. Democratic ideas find free expression in the newspapers and the radio, and are slowly remoulding the general pattern of thought. On the other hand, deep-rooted discontent with the policy of the Western Powers has stimulated the emergence of reactionary Islamic groups like the Young Men's Moslem Association and the Muslim Brotherhood, which aim at reversion to a state with a still more rigidly Islamic structure. These groups gain control of the 'personnel sections' of commercial firms and government offices so as to reserve appointments in them for Muslims only, and especially their own supporters.

Impressed by the divisive influence of religion, and despairing of a more conciliatory attitude amongst religiously-minded individuals, some intellectuals have drawn the conclusion that only a weakening of religious sentiment, and its replacement by cultural goodwill, offer hope of any advance towards true democracy in the Middle East. But the

low standards of morality in the Middle East today call for more religion, not less. It needs, however, to be a religious experience, released from the cramping limitations of the more reactionary types of Islam. A healthier solution would be the growth and development of that kind of religious conviction which can respect and live in harmony with people of a different religious background. Not a few members of both the Christian and Muslim communities hold that the disestablishment of Islam would solve the minority problem, and they have made this their primary objective. Were a truly democratic political structure to ensue they would probably be justified in their contention, but if a religious nationalism is merely replaced by a cultural or racial nationalism then the last stage of the minorities may be worse than the first.

The need for a change of attitude and outlook is not, however, confined to the Muslim majority; it is equally imperative among the minorities. Education in a western school, mastery of a foreign language, love of a foreign culture, may easily raise a mental barrier between them and their Muslim fellow-countrymen, and lead to an attitude of dislike and contempt towards the ignorant Muslim masses. Only too often the interests of the minorities are limited to the welfare of the community to which they belong, and they devote themselves to its educational, medical and benevolent services. They are concerned to a much smaller degree about the wellbeing of the nation. Some Christians, from dislike of Muslim domination, cherished secret satisfaction at the defeat of the Arab armies in the Palestine war, and not a few nowadays turn to Communism in the hope that it will bring this domination to an end. Theirs is a minority complex and a persecution mania. Much wiser, as well as more Christian, is the attitude of those individuals who throw their energies unreservedly into co-operation with their Muslim fellow nationals in combating the giants of superstition, ignorance, poverty and disease, and seek to pioneer a path through the jungle of Middle East problems. The challenge that confronts them is to accomplish this without denying their specifically Christian witness. But their attitudes and actions

will be more eloquent than their words. In cases of persecution Christians cannot do better than address a direct appeal to the authorities, claim their rights under the law, and, if necessary, seek publicity in the press. Middle East governments are jealous to retain a good representation abroad for liberal-mindedness, especially as many minority groups are of an 'international' character seeing that they are resident in several different states.

In considering the changes now developing in political thought in the Middle East, the status of Christian missions from abroad demands a brief investigation. Though their institutions still constitute an important element in the educational, medical and welfare services of Middle East countries, they are exposed to the same type of restrictions as are applied to national Christian institutions. They suffer from the additional disadvantage of 'foreignness'. Public opinion assumes that they have the active support of the government of the country from which they emanate, as was evidenced in a book recently published in Beirut entitled, 'Missions and Imperialism', by Mustapha Khalidi and Omar A. Farrukh. They are accused, therefore, of religious and cultural 'imperialism' and of encouraging a spirit of sectarianism in the Middle East. Their treatment reflects the popularity or unpopularity of their home government. In 1940 Iran closed all foreign schools: Turkey forbids Turkish children to attend foreign primary schools. Foreign missions are subject to the same regulations as apply to other foreigners—visas may be withheld, as in Iran, or no new visas granted except to replacements, as in Egypt: travel facilities may be curtailed, as in Iran, or the right to own land denied, as in Syria.

No single factor would bring relief to the work of foreign missions in the Middle East more than an easing of international tension. The measure of religious freedom they enjoy is in inverse ratio to the degree of strain in international relations. But missions, too, can contribute to a better understanding of their ultimate objective by laying stress on the two-fold aspect of the Christian gospel—its indigenous character as the fulfilment of all that is worthy in

national culture, and its ecumenical spirit as transcending the barriers of nationalism, and providing an ethical basis for international co-operation and goodwill. The truth for which they stand is not confined by national boundaries.

IX

Islam and the West

It was the realisation of their military weakness which first induced the countries of the Middle East to open their doors to western influences. In accepting the products of western technology they had no wish, at the same time, to surrender their own distinctive culture. But, as Professor Toynbee has so ably demonstrated, once a foreign technology is adopted in lieu of traditional methods, the effect will ultimately be felt in every aspect of the traditional culture. The penetrative power of the impact of western thought on the political, economic and social structure of Middle East States has been recorded in earlier chapters; we must now consider its assault on the citadel of Islamic belief, and here we must note another dictum of Professor Toynbee that 'the penetrative power of a strand of cultural radiation is usually in inverse ratio to this strand's cultural value.' In other words, the Middle East has manifested a much slower response to western religious influences than to other forms of western penetration.

Evaluation of the changes wrought in the Middle East by western civilisation is complicated by the absence of any clear definition of that civilisation. To Middle East observers it may mean any one of several different things—Christianity, a Greco-Roman cultural heritage, a scientific approach to life, technological 'know how', secularism, materialism, high ethical standards of public and personal conduct, or drugs, drink, divorce and the worst features of the Hollywood film or the scandal-mongering newspaper. Or it may be regarded as an amalgam of any combination of these forces. Islam does not differentiate sharply within its own structure between the religious and the secular, and the impact of western ideas on the political and social framework

of Islamic society is still in one sense an impact on Islam itself. A man may consider himself a convinced Muslim though he has long abandoned the observances of the prescribed religious practices.

Reaction to western culture may be classified under the headings of adoption, rejection and reconciliation, though no sharp line of distinction can be drawn between the three groups, and within each group a multiplicity of viewpoints may be represented. These divisions correspond, in many respects, to the reactions to western political thought already described in the preceding chapter.

Both Ataturk and Riza Shah came to the conclusion not only that the disestablishment of Islam was essential to the progress of the states they ruled, but that Islam itself was overlaid with accretions and practices which must be purged. The Turkish government, therefore, abolished the Dervish Orders, replaced the old Muslim schools with educational institutions of a modern type, substituted the Latin alphabet for the Arabic, forbade the use of the veil and the fez, and took measures for the emancipation of women. In Iran marriage was made a civil ceremony, the wife was given the right, in certain circumstances, to sue for divorce, the veil was abolished, Muslim theological seminaries were placed under state control, and the income from religious endowments was used to support public welfare projects. Both Ataturk and Riza Shah were probably agnostics or atheists at heart, but many of their supporters, who welcomed these innovations in the name of progress which they identified with material and cultural advancement, still clung to their faith in the belief that, though the less Islam had to do with public life the better, still, as a spiritual force for private conduct, its light was undimmed.

Certain intellectuals in the Middle East who have drunk deeply of the waters of western culture have, on the other hand, lost interest in religion altogether. They do not deny the pragmatic value of religious sanctions for the common people as a means of raising their ethical standards, but for themselves they do not feel the need for religion. Western philosophy and eastern culture have dethroned Islamic

theology from the central position in their intellectual armory. Others are activated more by the conviction that the key to progress in the Middle East lies in more technology, the scientific outlook and higher education. Religion, if not actually valueless, is at least irrelevant. Both of these groups are critical of religion as such, though they may still consider themselves Muslims for all practical purposes. When, however, such people begin to apply to the study of Islam itself the same principles of historical, literary, and scientific criticism which they have acquired in their study of western culture, they are at once met with a fusillade of abuse from the more conservative Muslim scholars. Such was the bitter experience of Dr. Taha Hussein after writing his book on *Pre-Islamic Poetry*, of Dr. Ali Abder Raziq after reinterpreting the nature and purpose of the caliphate in his book on *The Origins of Government*, and of Khalid Mohammed Khalid after his essay entitled *From Here we Begin.*

A much larger number of Muslims, especially in the oil centres and larger cities, have drifted away from religion altogether, not from intellectual conviction, but because of the attraction of the materialistic and secularist elements in western culture. Money-making, pleasure-seeking and political intrigue claim their devotion and loyalty. They would probably repudiate emphatically any suggestion that they had ceased to be Muslims, but their interest is centred exclusively in the political and economic strength of the Muslim world, and not in the spiritual or cultural values of Islam. For them religion as such has lost its grip.

The number of Muslims who have entered into a full and sympathetic understanding of the Christian principles underlying the best elements in western culture is strictly limited, and still fewer are those who are prepared to abandon Islam and identify themselves with the Christian Church. The reasons for the common misconception of Christianity in Muslim lands will be dealt with in a later chapter: the absence of complete religious liberty partially accounts for the small circle of Christian converts.

In contrast with these groups there are various sections within the Muslim community which are persuaded that it

is the entanglement of the Muslim world in the western net which is responsible for the spiritual and moral degradation of Islamic countries. If they had their way they would reject all western influences, from whatever source they emanate. All they would retain are the technological products of western science, and these only in order that they might employ them as weapons against the West itself. Islam, they believe, must be revived so as to withstand the corroding effects of western culture on the one hand, and the revolutionary ideology of Communism on the other. Whatever is bad in Islam is, they believe, extraneous to its true nature. The way to progress lies in a return to the Koran and the rejection of later accretions, or in a puritanical cleansing of Islamic society from the demoralising practices of drinking, smoking, wearing silk, and similar effeminate habits. They contrast the strictness and austerity of the Muslim ethic with the laxity of morals so prevalent in the West, and, with some reason, denounce the corrupting effects of the films, the plays and the magazines which pour in from western sources.

One manifestation of this revival of Islam has been the despatch of preaching missions to the Southern Sudan and other regions under the auspices of a special department in El Azhar University whose function it is to co-ordinate and further Muslim propaganda. Another is the proposal to hold a conference of Muslim leaders in Cairo at the time of the annual pilgrimage. This same purpose of rejuvenating Islam underlies the emphasis now being placed by Muslim governments on Koranic readings on the radio, the encouragement of the pilgrimage, the enforcement of the Ramadan Fast, and the broadcasting by loud speakers of services and sermons from the mosques. But this revival, while religious in content, often lacks spiritual conviction and force.

This second classification of those who reject western culture shades off into the third, which comprises all those who are assured that there is no fundamental incompatibility between Islam and all that is progressive and valuable in western thought. There are, however, two different schools of thought regarding the reconciliation of Islam and western culture. One group believes that Islam as it now is can be

shown to accord with western progress: the other group realises that there must first be some modification in Islam itself. The methods followed by the first group in proving the compatibility of the two are varied and intriguing. Some, by ingenious devices, read back into the Koran and other Islamic sources the germinal thoughts now enunciated by modern science, or distinguish between those elements in the Koran which are of permanent religious value and those which represent only the ideas and habits of seventh century Arabia. Others claim that both Islam and western culture stem from the same Greco-Roman tradition and therefore are fundamentally one in beliefs and culture. Usually this attitude of mind reveals a very superficial acquaintance with classical literature, and overlooks the fact that while scholasticism helped to shape the form of medieval Islamic thought, it did not penetrate deeply into its inmost doctrinal recesses. It is no uncommon experience in the Middle East to find students who are content to hold Islam and western thought in two separate mental compartments, between which there is no serious interconnection. A typical example of this dualistic approach was revealed in the introduction into the curriculum at El Azhar University of lessons in the arts and sciences parallel to the theological studies as if the two courses could be held apart without influencing one another.

A more exacting task awaits those more profound and straightforward thinkers who are seeking in a sincere and genuine way to merge western and Islamic thought into a single and novel pattern, and who realise that this process will necessitate some radical changes in their Islamic conceptions. Whether the subject be polygamy, divorce, the emancipation of women, birth control, or woman's suffrage, they are prepared to endorse in theory, and often in practice, western standards of conduct, and to justify their attitude by reinterpretation of Islamic sources. To the western mind this may seem to involve some speculative juggling with words, but it may be well to remember the comment of the Indian philosopher, Mr. Khuda Bukhsh: 'Concessions to the demands of the times being admitted, these concessions are justified by appeals to the Koran and the traditions of the

Prophet. Whether the appeal be real or illusory the fact of the appeal is one more instance of the utility of legal fiction in the history of human development.' To the strictly orthodox these ideas are anathema. Incidentally, the orthodox themselves have unconsciously made concessions to progress by significant modifications in the Sharia Law, making selections, if necessary, from different systems of jurisprudence which had hitherto been kept strictly apart.

The radical transition from a traditional to a dynamic conception of Islam raises the basic question whether Islam has within itself the faculty for far-reaching adaptation. Lord Cromer's dictum that 'Islam reformed is Islam no longer' overlooks the historical fact of the assimilation of Islam to a wide variety of environments, legalistic, mystical, and animistic. Indeed it would be difficult to furnish any one definition of Islam which would cover all its manifestations throughout the world today. Not only does Islam in Iran, for example, differ widely from Islam in Egypt, but within any single Muslim country there are fundamental differences between the religious beliefs, experiences and practices of the sheikh class, the effendis, the dervishes and the illiterate masses. Around the common core of the one creed, and of such unifying forces as the pilgrimage, the Ramadan Fast, the five daily prayers, and the duty of almsgiving, many divergent beliefs and customs have developed. The efforts of the modernists to bring Islam up-to-date will require some revolutionary changes in the theological structure of Islam itself. The orthodox would deny that the normal methods of Igtihad and Igma' (private judgment and public consensus) can be stretched to cover such extreme modifications. Their purpose, according to orthodox doctrine, is limited to working out the implications of the basic principles propounded by the four accepted schools of Islamic theology. Unless, however, greater freedom and wider scope are given in the use of Igtihad (private judgment), no peaceful progress may be expected.

The question may legitimately be asked whether Islam has within itself the spiritual force required to meet the demands of a new and bewildering epoch. One shrewd observer has

given as his opinion that there is 'no inner power in the Muslim countries themselves which produces sufficient moral directive and determination to effect this transformation.' (This comment was made by Dr. Kraemer in an article in *The International Review of Missions*.) Time will show whether his opinion is justified. If Islam cannot provide an answer to the perplexing problems of the day, be they political, economic, social, cultural or religious, where will the Muslims turn for a satisfying answer? Will it be to Communism, to secularism, or to Christianity? In this connection certain aspects of the problem deserve notice. It has often been observed that Islam is a culture without a rural basis. Can it adjust itself to the requirements of an area mainly agricultural? Orthodox Islam is a totalitarian system which seeks to regulate the whole of life, social and individual, by the Sharia Law. Can Islam be so modified so as to give to government, law and social organisations that relative autonomy which is one of the pre-suppositions of modern civilisation? Islam is essentially theocratic: can it be made democratic without at the same time falling into secularism? Islam is universal in its claims: can it remain as a uniting force between Muslim states and yet fit into the scheme of modern nation-states? It is to be doubted whether Muslims are as yet fully aware of the demands which these issues are making on their philosophy of life. Hitherto they have shown too much complacency, self-satisfaction, a defensive attitude, and resentment at external criticism.

No really convincing synthesis between Islamic tradition on the one hand and western culture, with its dual strand in Christianity and Hellenism on the other, has yet been achieved. Dr. Charles Malik has expressed his conviction that 'a genuine, original, abiding, responsible synthesis of East and West, one that understands, absorbs, reconciles, rises above both East and West, has never been accomplished —at least, it has never been accomplished in the Near East.' The aim of any such endeavour would not be the complete westernisation of Middle East peoples, but the emergence of 'a culture of their own analogous to that of the West, and in communion with it, but deriving its animating spirit from a

revived Islam.' The ability of the West to co-operate with the Middle East in this intellectual and spiritual struggle depends in turn upon another fundamental issue—whether western civilisation is itself essentially secular or Christian. At present the West appears to be too divided in its own thinking to be able to give much help to Islam. 'The conflict in the soul of the West is not only an internal issue; it is a factor of universal import.'

Meanwhile, the spiritual and intellectual struggle through which the Middle East is passing has had a most disturbing effect on men's minds—an effect all the greater in proportion to the sincerity with which the task of reconciliation between East and West has been undertaken. The resulting malaise of spirit, the sense of being in two worlds and yet belonging to neither of them, is well epitomised in the following words from Mr. A. Hourani: 'Those educated in western schools became aware of new ideas and norms; they became conscious that the West was judging them in the light of those norms, and as the movement of western learning grew they began to judge themselves in the same way. Thus there arose an inner unrest, a need to justify themselves which might manifest itself equally in an uneasy, defensive clinging to tradition, or in the eagerness to abandon them and accept the manners of those of the western world.'

In this process of refashioning Islamic thought, one problem yet unresolved is that of the relation of Islam to Arab culture. The same motives of antagonism to western domination which prompted a resuscitation of Islam helped also to create a revival of Arabism. The teaching of the Arabic language and of Arab history, geography and civics was made obligatory in all school syllabuses, national or foreign. The Arab Academy was set up to produce a scientific vocabulary in Arabic so that the constant employment of foreign technical phraseology might be unnecessary. The Cultural Committee of the Arab League has as its aim the unification of educational methods and standards throughout the Middle East. Nearly five hundred teachers from Egypt, the centre of this Arab revival, have been seconded for service in Syria, Iraq, Kuweit, Bahrein, Libya, and other countries. An all-

Arab Press Conference was held in Cairo in April 1953, and from Cairo thousands of newspapers, magazines and books of all kinds, religious and secular, circulate to the furthest confines of the Arabic-speaking world. But the question must still be answered whether this is in essence a cultural revival or a religious one. Arabic is the language of the Prophet Mohammed, and of the Koran, and is sacred to all Muslims, but are Arabism and Islam but the two sides of the same coin? The cultural movement which appealed to the young intellectuals of Beirut in the mid-nineteenth century, and especially the stress laid on the study of the Arabic language, received its first impetus from a small group of Christians who believed that the sharing of a common Arab heritage would break down the sectarian barriers which separated the Christians from the Muslims in the Lebanon and draw the two communities closer together, but if in fact Islam and Arabism are indistinguishable there is really no future for the Arab Christian communities in the Middle East.

X

Israel's Aspirations and Apprehensions

THE justification for the creation of the State of Israel was in part the intrinsic right of the Jews to give political expression to their national consciousness, and in part the pressing need for a harbour of refuge for the persecuted minority in Europe. One of the first laws of the new state was the law of return, which gave to every Jew the right to enter Israel unless he were proved to be engaged in subversive activity. Plans were at once laid for the reception within five years of one million Jews, and within ten years of two million. This policy of 'unlimited immigration' was prompted by a curious mixture of motives—the Old Testament idea of the return of the exiles, a sense of communal responsibility within Jewry, fear that the exits from other countries might one day be closed, and the belief that Israel is under-populated and in urgent need of more young people for its defence. The reasons why Jews in other countries responded to this invitation varied from one person to another. Some came to share in a centre of Jewish culture or because emigration to the USA was difficult, others from a desire to leave the countries where so many of their relatives were brutally murdered, or because they were virtually forced out of Arab lands. The Israeli authorities refused at first to place limits on Jewish immigration in spite of the indisputable fact that the country could never absorb all the Jews in the world should they desire to emigrate, and so could not furnish a complete answer to the Jewish problem. For those immigrants who did cross the seas to find a home in Israel, the flight of the Arab refugees, in Dr. Weizmann's words, was ' a miraculous simplification of Israel's tasks.'

From the foundation of the state until the 31st July, 1953, 718,000 new immigrants have been received. Of these 47 per cent hailed from Europe (mainly from Poland and countries behind the Iron Curtain), 34 per cent from Asia (34,822 from Turkey, 124,494 from Iraq, 26,799 from Iran, 45,127 from the Yemen and 14,679 others), and 15 per cent from Africa (54,884 from Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, 32,352 from Libya and 18,836 from other parts.) During the mandatory period, two-fifths of the Jewish immigrants came from Poland and large numbers later from Germany and German-occupied territory who fled from Nazi persecution. During the past two years the rate of immigration has considerably slowed down for several reasons. There is less pressure from outside; the doors from Russia and South East Europe are closed; and the Israeli government has, since 1952, obtained authority to apply certain conditions to immigrants. Actually today emigration exceeds immigration, a situation which is causing the government both anxiety and embarrassment. No fewer than 38,263 persons have left the country since its foundation. A partial explanation may be found in the inability of some Jews, especially those of the older age-groups, to adapt themselves to the austerity conditions prevailing in the new state, or the conviction that they had been misled by Zionist propaganda.

The work of fusing immigrants from such diverse backgrounds and traditions into a single, unified, community has not been easy. Each group inevitably brought with it the mentality of its country of origin. The atmosphere of the ghetto surrounded a large proportion of the Jews from Eastern Europe. Those from Russia carried in their baggage the doctrines of Russian Socialism and the idealistic aims of Count Tolstoy and Ahad Haam. The Germans made their special contribution of orderliness, discipline and efficiency. Most of the Yemenites were strictly orthodox, and not a few addicted to the mystical Kabbala. Between these different groups tensions soon appeared; for example between the Yemenites and the white-skinned Jews, between the Polish, German and Central European Jews, between the Sephardi and Ashkenazi, between the strictly orthodox and the

modernists. Religious, cultural and economic differences, all played their part in accentuating these divisions. Even colour prejudice is not unknown in Israel, so that some Indian Jews on account of it decided to go back. There is often a clearly defined line of distinction between the earlier immigrants who came voluntarily as pioneers and the later comers who were refugees and who did not always intend to make Israel their permanent home.

Nothing but the mystical attachment of all Jews to the land of Palestine could possibly provide an adequate incentive for welding so differentiated a population into a single whole. The most effective methods of unification have been the two-year period of Army Service, attendance at the same schools, a common use of Hebrew, and the cultural and technical courses of instruction given in the Reception Camps and Works Villages (Maaborat). Had it not been for the readiness of the whole community to make the most exacting sacrifices, the absorption particularly of aged, crippled and incurably sick immigrants could never have been achieved, many of the new-comers into the country bringing no capital and no skill with them, and not a few being in dire need of both physical and psychological rehabilitation.

Though the number of English-speaking immigrants has been, from the Zionist angle, disappointing, the leadership of the country has remained largely in their hands and in the hands of Jews from Germany and Russia. But what of the future? Will power tend to swing to the Jews of Eastern Europe or to the Oriental Jews, or to those born in the land? The greater fertility of the Oriental Jews and the effect of the climate may well combine to make of Israel an oriental country. Speaking in the Israeli parliament Mr. Sharett said: 'We come not as occidental invaders but as citizens of the Orient returning to our country.' The popular concept of Israel as essentially a western nation may in time be wide of the mark. At the moment Israel is a race in transition. Her hope lies in the future and especially in the Sabras, the children born in the land. It is claimed that many of them do not have characteristically Jewish features and in this fact their parents take inordinate pride. Dr. Weizmann once said:

'We are welcoming the débris of Jewish communities throughout the world. The first generation may be a liability but the second will build Israel.' From this strange medley of cultures from many different lands something new is being born.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Israel's relations with other states are coloured to some extent by her recent history, but still more by her dependence for survival on foreign financial aid. The tragic episodes of the closing years of the mandatory period naturally left a legacy of ill-will towards Great Britain, which was not relieved by the latter's continued subsidising of the Arab Legion. Towards the USA Israel has consistently cherished feelings of profound gratitude, both for her part in the state's creation and also for substantial financial assistance. Turkey is the one Middle Eastern country with which Israel is on good terms.

The story of Israel's relations with Russia is a chequered one. From 1917 onwards Zionism was dubbed by the Soviet a fascist movement and an imperialistic tool of Great Britain. At first Russia favoured a unitary Arab-Jewish State, but on the 14th May 1947 unexpectedly announced that she would support partition as a second-best solution to the Palestine problem. The prospect attracted her of profiting by the situation which would be created by Great Britain's relinquishing of the mandate, and she hoped to participate if necessary in the enforcement of partition. When Russia became the first country to grant the new state recognition both *de facto* and *de jure*, and when in the days of the arms embargo she made possible the acquisition of arms from Czechoslovakia, her stock in Israel stood high; but Israel's adoption of an attitude of 'non-alignment' in the cold war and her support of the United Nations at the time of the crisis in Korea alienated Russian feeling. Emigration of Jews to Israel from Russia and Eastern European countries was stopped and Zionist activities in Russia suppressed. The request from Israel for a loan was not even answered, and

negotiations initiated by Israel for a trade agreement came to nothing. There have been recent indications of an undercurrent of anti-Semitism in Russian policy, and for several months during 1953 diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken off. Israel can never afford to lose sight of the fact that there are still one and a half million Jews in Russia, many of whom would like to emigrate. Her position at the moment is a delicate one, and for different reasons she must avoid antagonising either the Western Powers or the Soviet Group.

COMMUNISM, DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM

There is in Israel an officially recognised Communist Party which returned five members to parliament at the last election, three of them Jews and two Arabs. In addition two of the three groups that constitute the important Mapam (United Workers) Party as well as the fighters' party (the former Sternists) are pro-Russian. The large Mapai (Labour) Party is definitely anti-Communist, while the orthodox groups condemn Communism on religious grounds. Up to the present there has been no nationalisation of industry, nor is any contemplated. The programme of the Mapam Party, however, includes the nationalisation of key industries, a firmer control of trusts, a capital levy, a state monopoly of foreign trade, and the transfer of the economic enterprises and social services of Histradruth (the great Labour Federation) to the nation.

Israel lays claim to being an outpost of democracy in the Middle East, and is so regarded by the Western Nations, especially the USA. At the time of the foundation of the state, the United Nations stipulated the formulation of a democratic Constitution to be submitted to a Constituent body before the end of 1948. A draft Constitution was in fact prepared which 'incorporated every freedom and safeguard for the individual developed through centuries of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence', but its adoption has been postponed. There is at present an interim Organic Law. With so large a proportion of the population originating from Eastern

Europe, it is not surprising that Israel's democracy takes the form of majority rule rather than the western democratic emphasis on civil liberty. In fact the cabinet and the administration tend to be bureaucratic, and there are frequent charges of inefficiency and harshness. Some excuse for the government's autocratic conduct may be found in the divisive elements that still exist in the country. In one respect, Israel scores over other Middle Eastern administrations; namely in her freedom from corruption. A Civil Service Commission was appointed which effected a thorough purge.

Proportional representation is the rule in Israel, whether for allocation of seats in parliament or for administrative offices. Jewish political-mindedness was reflected in the submission by each of twenty-one Parties of one hundred and twenty names at the first Parliamentary Election held in February 1949. Everyone over eighteen years of age resident in the country was enfranchised, male or female, Christian, Muslim or Jew, and over 80 per cent of the electorate cast their votes. The party that received the largest support was Mapai, the Labour Party, and the 1948 Cabinet was drawn from Mapai, the Progressive Party (one of the sections of the General Zionists) who lay great stress on human rights, and the Oriental Communities. After the 1951 election Mapai and the Religious Bloc provided the members of the cabinet with the addition more recently of a minister from the General Zionists. Mr. Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister, had previously gained valuable political experience as Secretary of the Jewish Agency, which under the mandate had developed into a 'shadow Government, a State within the State'. It was he who insisted that the Presidency held first by Dr. Weizmann should be modelled on the French rather than the American pattern.

Divisive forces in Israel are so powerful that the authority of the government has been at stake on several occasions. These divisions are not communal as in the neighbouring Arab States, but political. During the critical months of the Palestine war, the Palmach, the private Army of the Mapam Party, insisted at first on retaining its own headquarters, and Mr. Ben Gurion only succeeded in abolishing this absurd

arrangement at the price of splitting the Labour Party. The two terrorist organisations, the Irgun Zwei Leumi and the Stern gang, likewise insisted on retaining their own formations and it took the tragic gun-running incident of the Altalena in June 1948 and the murder of Count Bernadotte in September 1948 to give Mr. Ben Gurion the authority to insist on their disbandment as separate military units. Dr. Weizmann in 1948 spoke of 'the strong influence of the military and the necessity of building up strong civilian counter-influences.' Even today the Army is disposed to take matters into its own hands, as happened in the case of an Arab village near the frontier which the Supreme Court ordered to be restored to its inhabitants. The military immediately blew it up on the plea of security!

The Histadruth, the Federation of Trade Unions in Israel, has been described as 'economically a monopolistic trust, and politically a State within the State.' Its power impinges at times on that of the government and as the Labour Party's main support is derived from the Trade Unions it has to be 'canny' in its treatment of the Federation.

Party feeling in Israel still runs high and leads to bitter quarrels even in the communal settlements. The great single unifying force is fear for the security and survival of the state. Inevitably political life in Israel is still immature, but she has been fortunate in being able to call on younger men who came with rich experience gained in the service of other states. The judicial system carried over from the mandatory régime has worked well, and has won even among the Arab minority a reputation for impartiality and fairness.

Israel's aim is stated to be 'a Social Democracy in which the secret of community is revealed without impairing the freedom of the individual.' The present government is Socialist, and pins its faith to a planned economy and to co-operative or collective enterprises. Many of the early settlers from Russia and Eastern Europe, influenced by the ideas of such diverse sources as the Essenes, Rousseau, Tolstoy, Herzl and Marx, hoped to make Palestine a Socialist Utopia, and even under the mandate all the elements of a Social Welfare State were developed, including social security, a system of

group insurance for medical services, the partnership of labour and private capital in large industries, fixed wages and regulated hours of employment. The Jewish National Fund has followed throughout the principles of the Mosaic Law, and insisted that the land should belong to the people and not be alienated to individual owners but leased to them on easy terms.

Nowhere in the world is the co-operative movement stronger than in Israel. Histadruth is not only a Federation of Trade Unions. It is also the biggest employer in the country. About 75 per cent of all wage-earners of all political parties belong to it and it controls a vast network of co-operative organisations in almost every sphere of production, agricultural and industrial, as well as in building, banking, publishing and transport. It is also the largest shareholder in the most important factories. Its all-dominating influence in Israel's economy is, however, challenged by at least four other groups—the older settlers who want to employ Arabs as well as Jews, employers who wish to retain the right to select their own workers, the General Zionists who stand for an individualistic economic policy and free enterprise, and the shareholders of large undertakings like the Palestine Electric Company. These groups complain that the Histadruth carries an unfair influence with the government, and the latter in its desperate need for capital from countries not committed to a Socialist doctrine cannot afford to ignore their charges. Usually, however, private business finds it advisable to make terms with Histadruth, and certain enterprises are undertaken conjointly.

The government's aim is to attract capital from abroad at all costs. A law for the encouragement of Capital Investment was enacted in 1950. It accorded numerous concessions in regard to licences for raw materials, taxation exemptions, and permits for the transfer abroad of dividends in foreign currency. To facilitate the handling of investments an Investment Centre was established. Its purpose is to encourage those enterprises which can compete with foreign products and earn foreign currency, and to eliminate duplication in industry. But the government's Socialist tendencies, and the

entrenched position of Histradruth, have resulted in damping the enthusiasm of several potential investors.

Socialist doctrine finds its supreme idealistic expression in the Communal Farms (Sing., Kibbutz or Kvutza) where no wages are paid, but work is distributed and needs supplied on a collective principle. The discipline and spirit of comradeship to be found there attract young men and women of high ideals who accept the concomitant hardships with cheerful goodwill. These farms have evinced commendable sympathy and concern for the aged and for young children, for whom co-education and self-government are provided. Another type of farm is the co-operative (Moshav Ovdim) consisting of shareholders whose activities are co-ordinated through co-operative enterprises. This is more popular with the Oriental Jews, who do not like the absence of religion and all social conventions in the collective farms. A third type, the Moshav Shitufi, a co-operative village working on a collective basis, is preferred by ex-soldiers. All three sets of farms depend in turn on large national co-operative organisations such as the Wholesale Co-operative Society (Hamashbir), the National Selling Agency (T'Nuva), the Agency for the Sale of Oranges and Citrus (Pardess), and the Building and Contracting Society (Solel Boneh). Credit for agricultural and industrial development is derived from the Workers' Bank and the Central Bank of Co-operative Societies, which was founded by some enlightened philanthropists in the USA and Great Britain.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Even before the close of the mandate, Jewish educational, medical and social services were well advanced. Since the establishment of the new state they have been extensively expanded. In 1949 a compulsory educational law was passed providing free education for all children between the ages of five and thirteen, and also for those between fourteen and seventeen years of age who had not completed their education in special schools. Whereas in 1948–9 the budget of the Ministry of Culture and Education amounted to IL.582,000,

by 1952–3 it had been increased to IL.15,900,000. Four out of five children attend schools under the public system of education. Hitherto these schools have followed one of four more-or-less political trends; 40 per cent being general, which combine religious and secular education; 30 per cent Labour, emphasising secular and Socialist ideas; 20 per cent Mizrachi (Religious Zionists) with a traditional religious bias (or Agudat Israel which stress traditional Jewish education even more strongly); and 10 per cent comprising smaller groups without any outstanding trend. Outside the public school system stood a number of private schools conducted by Jewish communities from western countries, by certain religious groups, and by private individuals. The Youth Immigration Movement founded by Henrietta Szold has placed some 50,000 immigrant children, most of them orphans, under the guidance of trained teachers in village communities where they spend half the day in school and half in working on the land. The government's purpose is to eliminate the party influence of the present educational system as tending to perpetuate sectionalism, and thus to establish a uniform and unifying system of education.

Jewish medical services have always enjoyed a high reputation for efficiency, with the result that child mortality in Israel is the lowest in the world. Life on the farms also helps to build up a healthy stock. The Histadruth provides for its members a series of excellent social services, including educational, cultural, recreational and medical facilities. The enormous expansion in the government's medical services may be appreciated by the increase in the number of hospital beds from 4,626 in January 1949 to 10,456 in January 1953.

Several measures of progressive social legislation have been enacted since the establishment of the state. Women have the right to vote; they enjoy equality before the law; they may retain property belonging to them, and they have equal rights in the guardianship of children. The minimum age for marriage has been raised from fifteen years to seventeen, and no husband may dissolve a marriage against the wife's consent without a judgment from a competent court ordering

the dissolution of the marriage. Bigamy is now an offence for all communities, Muslim, Christian or Jewish. In 1950 corporal punishment was abolished, and in 1952 a Social Insurance law was passed.

THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE

On one vital issue Israel has not yet reached a clear-cut decision, and that is whether it is to be pre-eminently a religious or a secular state. Linked with this problem is the question whether a man is a Jew by race, religion, culture or nationality. Idealism played a leading part in the establishment of the state, even among those who would repudiate any strong religious sentiments. Men of all shades of belief and unbelief endorsed the policy of gathering the exiles as the means of fulfilling Israel's destiny, and the Declaration of Independence refers to 'the Rock of Israel', which is an accepted synonym for 'God'. That pioneer and inspirer of the Zionist movement, Ahad Haam, used to insist that the first task of Zionism was to preserve and revive Judaism rather than to rescue homeless and persecuted Jews. Great emphasis has been placed in official documents on Israel's position of leadership among the smaller nations. 'God', said Dr. Weizmann, 'has always chosen small countries through which to convey His message to humanity.' Israel is to be 'a light to the Gentiles,' and a blessing to all nations. Zionism, in Dr. Weizmann's eyes, is 'a force of life and creativeness residing in the Jewish masses.' One manifestation of this vitality of spirit has been the development of the fine arts in a great cultural movement in which even the poorest share, a movement which seeks to combine the best elements of both eastern and western culture.

But from this point onwards opinions divide. The Religious Zionists (Mizrachi) and one school of jurists demand the application in Israel of the Talmud and the Rabbinical law. Israel is to be the embodiment not only of Jewish nationalism but also of the Jewish faith. The draft Constitution states that new legislation must be in conformity with the basic teachings and ideals of the Mosaic law. Indeed the Minister

of Justice has established an Institute of Research into Jewish law, and has appointed also a committee for the codification of Rabbinical Law and its adaptation to meet the needs of the modern state.

There are in Israel some fanatical religious groups. One small community, the Naturei Karta (Guardians of the City) wanted an international trusteeship for Palestine, and on religious grounds opposed the establishment of the State of Israel. A fundamentalist group, Agudat Israel, (the League of Israel) with the support of the chief Rabbis, objected in 1951 to the conscription into the Armed Forces of young women belonging to their organisation. Their desire is to see Israel re-established as a theocracy. Some orthodox leaders strongly favour the reconstitution in Jerusalem of the Sanhedrin with its seventy-one members, so that it can modify existing Jewish Law and become the supreme Rabbinical authority for the whole world. The extreme fundamentalists, however, oppose this idea on the ground that only divine intervention can reconstitute the Sanhedrin. Vehicles operating in Jerusalem on the Sabbath are attacked by traditionalists, and in one Talmudic Seminary there the students still study the rites of animal sacrifice in the Temple. One small clique, the 'Canaanites', renounce both Judaism and Zionism and wish to revert to the primitive practices of the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Palestine. The Karaites resemble the more Puritanical groups in Islam in their desire to go back to Scripture itself, rejecting both the Talmud and oral traditions.

The Religious Bloc, which comprises three groups, Mizrachi (Religious Zionists), Hapoel Mizrachi (the religious wing of the Socialist Zionists), and Agudat Israel (the League of Israel), press for the application of the Rabbinical Law in regard to all questions of personal status of Jews; the observance of the Sabbath; and the retention of religious education in schools. They insist that the government should suspend all state transport on the Sabbath. The government has acceded to their demands in so far as only kosher food is imported into the country or supplied to the Army; government buses and railways do not run on the Sabbath, and

there is as yet no civil marriage and no civil divorce in Israel, though many secular-minded Jews are asking for these innovations. Two liberal Jewish Rabbis have even been denied the right to celebrate marriages because they do not observe all the minutiae of the Rabbinical Law in the Marriage Service. Mixed marriages are not approved and attempts are made so to widen the scope of the Mosaic Law as to render it applicable to every aspect of modern life. The proposal was made that every Israeli legation abroad should have a 'religious attaché' on its staff. Mr. Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister, did not however intend to let the Religious Bloc dictate the country's future line of development. In 1951 he presented to parliament a series of Bills which were designed to abolish the exemptions granted to orthodox young women subject to military service, to give women equality of status before the Law in religious courts and to authorise the Minister of Labour to decide what work on the Sabbath was of vital national importance and so must be maintained. Many Jews, resident in the collective farms, are heart and soul against the use of the state's authority for the enforcement of the religious law. Just as a few years ago the progressive Muslims in Egypt made the Azhari Sheikh the butt of their jokes, so in Israel today the liberal Jews laugh at their reactionary fellow countrymen. Writing in April 1953 Mr. Emile Marmorstein says: 'If one were to attempt a composite picture of a spiv from the satirical sketches on contemporary life performed on the Israeli stage, he would appear as a comic figure in traditional Jewish costume, picking lice from his ear locks, expressing himself imperfectly in old-fashioned Hebrew style and a sing-song tone, devoid of patriotism, and meditating on some underhand deal.' The subterfuges to which orthodox Jews resort in adapting the injunctions of religion to modern conditions certainly lay them open to the charge of humbug and hypocrisy. When Dr. Weizmann deplored the terrorist methods of the Stern gang as being contrary to the Zionist purity of ethics, and quoted the Mosaic law 'thou shalt not kill', the Stern gang retorted that it was following literally the Mosaic command of 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

A fundamental difference of conception regarding the essential structure of the State of Israel underlies these divergent views. One group maintains that Israel is held together not by religion but by nationalism; another that a man is a Jew by race and not by religious conviction; a third that it is religion and religion alone that is the unifying element. The inconsistencies between these three theories of the nature of the state are gradually emerging into the light of practical politics. There is reason to believe that religious sentiments still maintain a firm grip on men's hearts to a greater degree than would appear from the actual membership of the Religious Bloc. But orthodox Judaism, like Islam, is challenged by the insistent demands of modern life, and if it is to survive and to serve its people it must rid itself of the reactionary accretions with which it has been encrusted down the centuries. Like Islam, it must be informed by a new spirit, ready to accept truth and knowledge from every source, and liberated from the fanaticism of a moribund formalism. For the good of both the state and religion it were better that the two should not be identified.

The question of the religious basis of the state is of special significance for Jews still living outside Israel. The authors of the Balfour Declaration realised that the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine might raise critical issues for Jews everywhere, and stipulated that 'nothing shall be done which may prejudice the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.' Many Zionists in Israel heartily dislike those Anglo-Saxon Jews who are prepared to aid Israel financially but are not themselves willing to live there. They believe that the attitude of such lukewarm supporters is not only basically wrong but politically inexpedient, inasmuch as anti-Semitism will sooner or later catch up with them and force them to emigrate. The opposite point of view was summed up in the letter that the Jewish Conjoint Committee in Great Britain sent to the *Times* newspaper at the time of the Balfour Declaration: 'The Holy Land is part and parcel of a wider Zionist theory which regards all the Jewish communities of the world as constituting one homeless nationality. . . . Against this theory the Conjoint

Committee strongly and earnestly protest. . . . They hold Judaism to be a religious system with which their political status has no connection, and they maintain that as citizens of the countries in which they live they are fully and sincerely identified with the national spirit and interests of those countries.' They therefore reject the notion of 'a negation or liquidation of the Exile, and the idea that Zionism solves the whole problem for all Jews.' Some confusion of thought appears to have arisen from the fact that the Hebrew word Galut signifies both Dispersion and Exile. Non-Zionist Jews believe that the Dispersion will continue even though the Exile is ended.

Within the Zionist organisation both points of view evoke strong reactions. At the Zionist Congress held in Jerusalem in 1951, a resolution was submitted to the effect that the basic aim of Zionism is 'the redemption of the Jewish nation through the return of the exiles to the land of Israel and the strengthening of the State of Israel.' This resolution, however, was rejected and replaced by another reading: 'Zionism aims at the establishment for the Jewish people of a publicly recognised and legally assured home in Palestine', and declaring that the task of Zionism is 'to strengthen the State of Israel, to gather in exiles to the land of Israel, and to foster unity among the Jewish people.' One Zionist editor, Mr. H. Lewis, writes gloomily: 'Paradoxically enough, Statehood has dispossessed us of our Zionism. The Israeli now taunts us in a foreign tongue [Hebrew] for "interfering" from our side of the fence, and we from our cosy galut armchairs sulk at Israel's lack of gratitude for our generous giving.'

What then is to be the future relationship between the Jewish agency and the Zionist organisation on the one side, and the government of Israel on the other? As Israel is now a sovereign state it cannot receive directly from the United Jewish Appeal Fund sums which are charitable and therefore non-taxable in the USA. As a legal device for surmounting this difficulty, the services of the Jewish agency have been continued, but the Israeli government remains the final authority inside the country. The Zionist organisation represents rather the Jews outside Israel, and in its composition it

maintains the principle of a coalition of all the parties inside Jewry. The Israeli government is sensitive about its own position in Israel, and in November 1949 Mr. Ben Gurion asserted that the Zionist organisation should not continue as 'a State within a State'. Co-operation, however, between the two bodies continues on all matters affecting the Jews in Israel.

The Israeli Government has on occasion given the impression that it recognises a responsibility for Jews of all countries, and Zionist Jews have been known to exercise pressure and intimidation on non-Zionists. Israeli ambassadors in foreign countries are said to be ambassadors not only to those countries but also to the Jewish communities resident there. The Chief Rabbi of Israel has indicated his desire to be recognised as the supreme religious authority for the Jews of all countries. Not many months ago the USA Government had to remind the Israeli ambassador in Washington that he could not claim to speak in the name of Jews who were American citizens.

Jews outside Israel believe that it is possible for them to maintain a dual loyalty, a loyalty to the country of which they are citizens and a loyalty to Jewry. Their position, however, exposes them to attack on both flanks. Some non-Jews accuse them of giving priority to the interests of Israel over the interests of their own countries. Zionists on the other hand regard them as the victims of a delusion. Emile Marmonstein writes: 'The historical analogy of the simultaneous existence of a flourishing community in Babylon and of a Jewish State in Palestine in Hasmonean times, which has been put forward by some American-Jewish writers as the model for the relationship between American Jewry and the State of Israel, has provoked strong opposition on the part of some Israeli writers.' The Zionists have this argument in support of their point of view, that the establishment of the State of Israel has in fact resulted in a revival of anti-Semitism in both Europe and the Arab States and so increased the pressure on emigration to Israel. Arthur Koestler holds the individualistic view that the Jewish religion is so closely interwoven with ritual appertaining to the return to Palestine that Judaism as a

distinctive religion cannot survive in the Diaspora. It would, however, be more accurate to say that Judaism as a religion must undergo quite revolutionary changes if it is to survive as a spiritual, as opposed to a religious, force either in Israel or in Jewry.

If Israel is primarily the home of the Jewish race or the expression of Jewish nationalism, there can logically be no case for discrimination against Hebrew Christians resident in the country, but if the State of Israel is identified with Judaism or Jewish culture the same kind of problem arises for the Christian minority there as in orthodox Muslim countries. The precise number of Christian Jews in Israel is unknown, but it is reported that many hundreds of Hebrew Christians formerly living in countries behind the Iron Curtain availed themselves of the help of the Zionist Organisation to escape to Israel, and only after their arrival disclosed their Christian faith. A vigorous campaign has recently been launched in the Jewish press in opposition to the missionary activities of certain Roman Catholic and Protestant organisations in Israel, charging them with compelling children in their schools to attend Christian instruction, with offering material bribes and inducements to converts, and with assisting Jews to obtain the money and visas required for emigration abroad on condition that they are baptised. Some at least of the prejudice of the orthodox Jews against Christian Missions is due to the superior attractiveness of Christian educational institutions, which provide a more liberal education and place greater emphasis on character training than the ordinary Jewish schools.

Hebrew Christians are subjected to numerous disabilities, both social and economic, and public opinion is firmly ranged against them. Though the mandatory law regarding registration of change of religion still nominally operates, the registration of conversion to Christianity is usually evaded. The marriage of Christian Jews raises a difficulty because many of them entered the country as Jews, and therefore the only legal form of marriage they can claim is that of the Rabbinical Court. A special committee has now been appointed by Christian Missions to study the question of the employment

and settlement of Christians in Israel, with a view to easing their situation.

Another group to which this question of Israel's basic structure is a vital concern is the Arab minority, which differs from the majority of the population in race as well as religion. It numbers some 180,000 persons of whom approximately 40,000 are Christians, 16,000 Druzes, and the rest Muslims. Since the inception of the mandate, the Christians have consistently opposed the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish National Home and joined their Muslim fellow countrymen in resisting it; whereas some of the Druzes sided with the Jews in the fighting of 1948. The Arabs received a profound shock not merely from their defeat in the war but by their reduction to minority status.

The official attitude of the Israeli authorities has been directed towards the promotion of co-operation with the Arab minority. The Proclamation of Independence of May 14, 1948, called upon 'the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve the ways of peace, and play their part in the development of the state on a basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its bodies and institutions, provisional and permanent.' In the programme of the second Coalition Government of 1951 there is included the statement that 'the Arab minority and other minorities will be guaranteed complete equality of rights and obligations in civil, political, social, cultural and every other sphere. The government will extend assistance to the inhabitants of villages who were uprooted of their land as a result of the shocks of war to return to permanent re-settlement.' Several Jewish organisations in Israel have consistently pressed for a fair deal for the Arab minority. The Communists insist on equality of rights for all citizens and placed an Arab second on their list of candidates for parliament so as to ensure his election. The Mapam Party has set up a Commission to watch over Arab interests and to prevent discrimination.

In its official publications, the Israeli government lists with pride the many economic and social services it has rendered to the Arab community in the way of general assistance and special loans to Arab farmers resulting in more land under

cultivation and irrigation, improvements in agricultural methods, the introduction of new crops, the formation of more Arab Co-operative Societies, equal treatment with the Jews in regard to the price paid for farm produce, and equal wages for skilled and most forms of unskilled labour. Arabs have access to all hospitals, clinics or outpatients departments, and in addition special welfare activities have been started in Arab areas; special courses for training Arab personnel in social services have been set up and the graduates employed by the Ministry of Social Welfare. Three thousand Arab children receive meals daily at twenty food centres. More elementary schools for Arab children have been founded, and Arabic continues to be the basic language of instruction in them, with Hebrew taught from the third year onwards. The period of elementary education has been extended, kindergarten schools opened, and co-education introduced. In girls' education, in particular, outstanding progress can be recorded. Secondary extension classes have been added to elementary schools, and evening classes started for Arab working boys. Preparatory classes have also been organised for the training of Arab School teachers.

Arabs, both men and women, enjoy full political and civic rights. About 70,000 of them (representing 83 per cent of the names on the electoral register) voted in the second General Election and eight Arab candidates were returned to parliament. There is an adviser on Arab Affairs attached to the Prime Minister's office, and special departments dealing with Arab concerns within the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Health, Interior and Religion. Arabic is virtually recognised as a second official language, and there are two Arabic daily newspapers and one weekly. The Israeli Broadcasting Station maintains an Arabic Service of one and three-quarter hours daily in three sessions.

These services and concessions, however, represent only one side of the picture. On the other side must be set a number of discriminatory measures which have aroused the opposition not only of the Arab Members of Parliament but also of Jewish liberal opinion. The Israeli Nationality Law of April 1952, which conferred citizenship automatically on

Jewish residents, required non-Jews first to fulfil three conditions, and furthermore empowered the Minister of the Interior to grant or to withhold citizenship in their case. A Bill passed by parliament on the 10th March 1952 declared that rural land belonging to any Arab resident in Israel which had to be requisitioned by the government or army under the Emergency Laws before April 1st 1952 was to become the legal property of the State's Development authority. Protests against this measure were launched on the ground that there was no justification for arbitrary expropriation of these Arab lands which were merely being incorporated into Jewish agricultural settlements, and that the compensation offered on the basis of land values for 1950 (plus 3 per cent for each year until settlement) was ungenerous. Arab farmers resident at the time in a rural district were urged to take equivalent land on leasehold instead of their previous freehold. Again, Arabs living near the frontier have been subject to military government and their movements severely restricted, though recent reports indicate some easing of these onerous regulations. Innocent persons in Arab villages have on several occasions suffered reprisals for attacks by Arabs across the border on Jews living in frontier villages.

The effect of these and similar measures on Arab mentality may be illustrated by the following expressions of representative Arab opinion: 'The Arabs in Israel are undoubtedly subject peoples. They are treated as second-class citizens . . . although they form some 12 per cent of the population and bear their share of direct and indirect taxes, the Arabs are hardly represented in any government departments.' 'The government of Israel considers Arabs as a tolerated people who are not really wanted in the country. . . . There is real danger that in a short time many of the remaining Arabs will decide to leave the country because they have lost all means of economic support. These political and economic uncertainties create for the Arab minority restlessness and fear.' Mr. Norman Bentwich sums up the situation thus: 'Economic discrimination, denial of the rights of property, and security measures which work hardship.' The Israeli

government for its part blames the state of war against Israel maintained by the Arab States. It pleads in extenuation that 'it is only when the hostility and tension [from the Arab States] have become things of the past that there can be an effective integration of the Arab minority in the State of Israel.' It admits however that 'considerations of security and self-preservation inevitably dominate the Israeli approach to the Arab problem.'

The attitude of the Israeli government towards the religious activities of the Arab minority has on the whole been fair and reasonable. During the chaos and shooting of 1948, some Christian Churches were looted and desecrated, and the blame was laid by the Israeli authorities on the lack of discipline prevailing in the Israeli Army at that period. Ecclesiastical property occupied by the army has now been restored to its owners, and damaged buildings repaired. The value of Christian properties in Israel is said to amount to $250 million, and the Patriarchates situated on the Arab side of the line protest against the restrictions imposed on the transfer of their income upon which they are so largely dependent for the maintenance of their work in Jordan.

Each week-day morning eight minutes, and on Friday mornings fifteen minutes, are allocated on the broadcast service to the recital of chapters from the Koran. Christian services are broadcast on Sundays, and special religious broadcasts are allowed on Muslim and Christian holidays. Special departments for the affairs of the Muslim, Druze and Christian communities have been set up in the Ministry of Religions and Cults. As most of the Muslim religious leaders fled the country during the 1948 fighting, this department had to face the responsibility of re-establishing Muslim religious life, re-organising Muslim religious courts (which, with the concurrent jurisdiction of the civil courts, deal with questions of personal status in the Muslim community), and of making available the income from Muslim endowments for the maintenance of Islamic institutions. Two Muslim lay councils have been set up with a wide measure of autonomy in the administration of Muslim religious concerns. A committee of three scholars of Islam was appointed to survey

Muslim holy places and to advise about their safety. The function of the Ministry of Religions and Cults is to maintain the religious rights of the non-Jewish communities, to see to the upkeep of their buildings in the absence of their guardians, and to maintain friendly relations with their spiritual authorities whether in or out of Israel.

Dr. Weizmann realised clearly that 'the world will judge the Jewish State by what it will do with the Arabs.' The government's policy has hitherto alternated between trust and fear, and it is a tragedy that the Jews, who have themselves been the victims of so much persecution and discrimination at the hands of other peoples, have not been more zealous and insistent in showing a liberal attitude towards a minority under their control.

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XI

Israel's Economic Crisis

ISRAEL'S political, social, cultural and religious problems are complicated and perplexing, but in the opinion of many sympathetic observers they cannot compare in intricacy and importance with her economic and financial crisis. From the day of her foundation, Israel has been fighting a grim battle against insolvency. In the early days all efforts were devoted to winning the war, and agricultural and industrial production underwent a serious decline. Taxation and internal loans were insufficient to meet the cost of the war, and the government was forced to sell Treasury Bills to the Banks and Issue Department, and to borrow heavily from abroad.

The large-scale immigration programme has proved a serious drain on the country's resources. The cost of transport and settlement of each immigrant is estimated at between $2,000 and $2,500, the transport charges being shared between the Israeli government and the Joint Distribution Committee of America. These immigrants could never have been absorbed so quickly had the Trade Unions, the Co-operative Societies and the Communal Settlements not been prepared to modify their cherished practices, and the workers to accept a wage-freeze policy. From May 1948 to July 1953 the Jewish population of Israel increased by 820,000 from 650,000 to 1,470,000, and of the additional inhabitants 718,000 were immigrants. The total cost of their settlement will reach the colossal figure of between $1,700 million and $2,100 million. As the total investment in Israel during this period amounted to $650 million there is still need for a further $1,000 million to $1,400 million for this purpose. Only the continued generosity of the United Jewish Appeal in the USA can ease the financial burden.

From the outset the government has followed a policy of immediate austerity in the hope of future prosperity based on large-scale plans of agricultural and industrial development. Its first task was to reduce the wide gap between imports and exports, and so to approach as near as possible to a status of self-support. Between 1949 and 1951 the value of exports was increased by more than 50 per cent and their value per head of population has shown a continuous upward trend. The unfavourable trade balance has been reduced by one-third, but it is still of startling proportions. The deficit in foreign currency for the year 1953–4 was $145 million representing the difference between imports at $182 million and exports at $37 million. The government's aim is to reduce the deficit by ten million dollars per annum for the next seven years, so that by the end of this period it will stand at only $75 million. The anticipated expenditure on imports by 1960 is put at $196 million, and the anticipated value of exports at $121 million.

To meet the deficit in foreign trade during this period a sum of $735 million will be required. In addition the country will need $210 million to meet debt payments, and $765 million plus IL.1,092 million for capital investment. The ambitious development plan which the government has accepted is summarised in the following table:—

INVESTMENT COSTS 1954–1960

	Amount	
	in million dollars	*in million* IL
Agriculture	170	294
Irrigation	32	128
Power	50	29
Quarrying	25	37
Housing	22	70
Road Construction		36
Industry	150	270
Communication	125	51
Reserve	191	177
Total	765	1,092

Israel's total requirements for the next seven year period will thus be:—

	in million dollars	*in million* IL
To meet the trade deficit	735	
To meet debt payments	210	
To meet capital investment	765	1,092
Total	1,710	1,092

The success of this forward-looking plan is dependent on the anticipated receipt by the government during the same period of the following income:—

in million dollars	
510	during the next three years from the United Jewish Appeal and similar campaigns, from Bond Sales, from Jewish institutions, and from grants-in-aid from the USA.
500	during the following four years from the U.J.A. and similar sources, from Bond Sales and from Jewish institutions.
280	from private investments.
420	from German reparations.
1,710	

and in addition IL.1,092 million from the Jewish population in Israel in the form of counterparts; that is, payments by Jews in Israel as counterpart to the Independence Loan receipts in dollars.

The dependence of Israel's finances on generous and consistent support from abroad in the form of loans, gifts and investments, needs no underlining. The Arab States were both angry and disappointed that the contributions of the USA government to Israel have been approximately equal to her total gifts to all the Arab States, and that the German government insisted on discharging what it considered to be its moral obligation towards the Jews who suffered under the

Hitler régime by paying reparations to Israel. For many years to come Israel will continue to rely on the financial aid of world Jewry and will probably encounter increasing psychological opposition, as many of her supporters in the USA and other countries had anticipated that long before this their assistance would no longer be required. Many forms of pressure, direct and indirect, are being imposed on Jews in the USA to maintain their giving at its previous high standard. The official figures outlined above indicate the extent to which Israel must depend on the sympathetic support and financial help of the USA Government, a fact which strengthens the force of the latter's counsels in any action it advises inside or outside the United Nations with a view to a peace settlement in the Middle East.

Israel's herculean efforts to achieve self-support would be futile without the loyal co-operation of the majority of the population. They are being asked to accept exacting sacrifices and austerity standards for the sake of the Jewish immigrants and the future financial stability of the state. In this respect Israel holds a supreme advantage over the governments of the Arab States, whose policy tends to be self-centred and short-sighted. Another factor to Israel's credit is the carefully prepared plan of economic development covering every phase of the life of the community; nor is this plan exposed in the same way as it would be in Arab countries to frustration through the corruption or inefficiency of the officials responsible for its execution.

One of the main items in the seven-year development plan is the expansion and improvement of agriculture. 'Back to nature' and 'back to the land' have always figured prominently in Zionist policy as a means of normalising Jewish life. Often, through no fault of their own, Jews in other countries have been confined to certain trades, businesses and professions. The early pioneers jumped at the opportunity of working on the land, but many of the new immigrants, especially the persecuted refugees, did not share the same motivation. Inmates of concentration camps in Europe had a natural desire to enjoy for a season the amenities of urban life, while elderly immigrants with a purely commercial or

professional training found a difficulty in adjusting themselves to rural conditions. In spite of these psychological barriers 327 new agricultural settlements were founded between May 1948 and September 1953, involving some 120,000 persons. The proportion of the population in rural areas has increased from 16 per cent in November 1948 to 23 per cent at the end of 1952. In estimating for the future it is anticipated that one quarter of the population will be rural and three quarters urban. As a method of agricultural training and of promoting agricultural productivity the first year of National Military Service is spent on the land.

Notable progress in agricultural production can be recorded. Whereas in 1948 70 per cent of animal fodder had to be imported, the figure has now been reduced to 30 per cent. More land, irrigated and unirrigated, has been devoted to fodder crops, new strains like sorghum introduced, grazing lands have been improved, and new feeding methods adopted. The volume of food imports was reduced by one quarter between 1949 and 1952. Rationing and food controls, changes in diet and increased local production all contributed to this reduction. Dairy farming during the same period has been increased by 80 per cent and vegetable production has been stepped up to keep pace with the growth of population.

During the next seven years two hundred new agricultural settlements are to be established, and the number of agricultural units increased from 42,300 to 83,600, the majority of them fieldcrop farms. But the principal direction of advance is to be along the lines of bringing more land under irrigation especially in the Negev, where it is estimated that five million acres can be reclaimed and resettled. In 1952 the total area cultivated was 3,583,000 dunams,[1] of which 600,000 were irrigated. The intention is to have by 1960 1,854,000 dunams irrigated out of a total cultivated area of 3,650,000 dunams. By these methods the total value of agricultural production will be increased, it is hoped, from $96 million in 1952 to $225,200,000 in 1959–60. It is estimated that 'from approximately one dunam of irrigated land it is possible to produce all the food one person requires,

[1] 1 dunam = approximately a quarter of an acre.

except part of the wheat which can be bought in return for that part of the produce which is exported.' Thus in 1960 local production would be able to supply 1,850 calories per person for a population of two millions, as contrasted with 207 calories per person in 1952 for a much smaller population.

To make these advances possible plans are being laid for a water supply of 1,500,000,000 cubic metres, which will be sufficient 'for the irrigation of 1,850,000 dunams and for the domestic and industrial needs of the country. When irrigated, this area can produce all the food and most of the industrial crops required for feeding a population of two millions, except half of the bread grains and part of the fodder.' One pre-supposition of the success of these projects is the unrestricted use of the waters of the river Jordan. This conflicts with both the UNWRA scheme for harnessing the waters of the Yarmuk for the benefit of the Palestine refugees, and the TVA scheme which would serve the interests of both Israel and Jordan. Rigid adherence to her own plans accounts for Israel's intransigent attitude in the United Nations in the dispute with Syria over the Lake Huleh area.

Israel's Co-operative Societies help to eliminate the problem of rural indebtedness which is the curse of Arab peasant farming, and her system of land tenure is free from landlordism. But she is faced with special problems of her own. Many of her agricultural workers are untrained and their productivity is lower than that of the former Arab proprietors or tenants. Because of the lack of equipment and of skilled labour, many dunams of abandoned Arab land still lie fallow. Many Jewish settlements carry a surplus labour force and so are obliged to resort to subsidiary industries such as jam-making.

Israel's industrial expansion will be accelerated, it is hoped, by new and ingenious methods of production such as the use of fermentation and of artificial plastics, and special emphasis is being placed on scientific, agricultural and industrial research. There has recently been a relative increase in heavy industry (metals, machinery and chemicals), and it is proposed to expand production in textiles, chemicals,

timber processing, diamonds, cellulose and paper manufacture, building materials, and metal and food-stuff industries. There is some difference of opinion among the experts as to whether Israel should follow the example of Switzerland and concentrate on high-grade finished products, or should copy Belgium and engage in primary industries. Lack of skilled labour, high labour costs and shortage of capital are at present the main obstacles to progress. Hitherto the government has supplied from its development budget one third of the capital invested in industry. The remainder has come from private investors, chiefly American Jews, who maintain unshaken faith in Israel's destiny. The total number of persons engaged in industry shows an increase of 50 per cent since the foundation of the state.

The government's comprehensive plan of economic development contemplates also a large increase in electric power facilities, especially from hydro-electric sources, an extensive housing programme (at present there are on an average 2·6 persons per room in Israel, and most dwellings are single-roomed), improvements in road, rail and air transport, the development of the Merchant Marine, an increase in fisheries, the encouragement of tourist traffic, and even the possibility of cutting a canal from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Aqaba. The need for broadening the base of the country's present economy is obvious. Today over half of Israel's exports are citrus products, and diamonds account for another 25 per cent. It is hoped to secure a more balanced financial situation by increasing the export of agricultural produce and by exploiting the rich mineral deposits of the Negev and Dead Sea area. An Oil Bill was passed in 1952, and already six groups (four of them foreign and two foreign and local working in co-operation) are investing millions of dollars in drilling for oil. The possibility of the existence of uranium is not ruled out.

The Korean war caused inflationary trends in Israel, and these were held in check first by controls and subsidies and later by devaluation and the gradual abandonment of controls. The menace of a black market has not yet been completely overcome. Since the beginning of 1952 no more

Treasury Bills or Land Bonds have been sold. Credit has been controlled, and the Israeli pound revalued to accord more closely with its actual purchasing power. There are now three exchange rates at $2.80, $1.40 and $1.00. The cost of living has risen, and in order to reduce money supply the government in June 1952 ordered a conversion of bank notes and a forced loan of 10 per cent on cash and bank deposits. The financial position of the country is still extremely precarious. Government debts in foreign currency amounted on the 30th June 1953 to $397,280,000 to be refunded by 1966. The latest government report states: 'We must understand once and for all that we have to live within our income and that we cannot continue indefinitely to cover our deficit with funds that come as gifts, and above all not with loans. . . . We have over-expanded our services, and we must freeze or even contract them over the next few years.'

The question must be asked in all seriousness and with complete impartiality whether Israel's economy can ever be completely self-supporting. It should be remembered that Palestine has never been self-supporting, but for centuries has relied on the charity of the West and the sums spent on pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Even were the government's most optimistic plans to be fully implemented, there would still, after a lapse of seven years, be according to official prognostications a trade deficit of $75,000,000 per annum. Admittedly, therefore, the country's financial stability will necessitate many more years of generous subsidising. Whether Israel can ever achieve full self-support is therefore open to doubt. Another question of immediate concern is the possible effect of a peace settlement with the Arab countries on Israel's economy. Without question it would benefit Israel in several directions—by the saving of expenditure on her Armed Forces, by the flow of oil to the Haifa refineries, by the lifting of the blockade, by the purchase at lower prices of raw materials and grain from Arab countries, and by the opening to her of Arab markets. But the dependence of Israel on trade with Arab countries must not be exaggerated. Under the mandate 85 per cent of Palestine's exports were shipped to Great Britain, the USA and the continent of

Europe. The Arab Blockade alone would never, as far as one can see, cause bankruptcy in Israel, but it might prove a contributory factor. Were peace to be established and Israel able to participate in a large Middle East economic bloc, her chances of paying her way would be greatly enhanced, as her economy is in many respects complementary to that of the Arab countries.

XII

The Christian Churches

In the mutual relations of the churches in the Middle East all church history is epitomised. Here are represented all the main branches of the Christian Church, differing widely in creed, order and liturgy, and yet the majority calling and considering themselves orthodox. Here in an attenuated form survive the Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries with their echoes of the great ecumenical Church Councils. But these churches are not mere historical relics or museum pieces. They may now retain but a shadow of their former greatness. Internal divisions, internecine struggles with other churches, and the relentless pressure of Islam may down the centuries have sapped their vitality. Yet each has a spiritual life of its own of supreme importance to itself, to the other churches, and to the future of the country in which it is located.

The largest and by far the most important of these ancient churches is the Eastern Orthodox Church with its Patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople, reminders of the days when almost the whole of the Middle East was Christian at least in name. The political rivalry of the western and eastern emperors and the respective claims to pre-eminence of the Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople led over a long period to the tragic separation in 1054 of the great Church of the East from her sister Church in the West. Within the Eastern Orthodox Church is a series of self-governing or 'autocephalous' churches in communion with one another, each with its Patriarch and administration, but all united on matters of worship and doctrine. The language of the liturgy, so far as the Middle East is concerned, is either Greek or Arabic, or else both are used. This church is still a force to be reckoned

with in the Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Turkey and Egypt.

The once numerous, powerful, missionary 'Church of the East' (the Nestorian or Chaldean Church) which rejected the findings of the Council of Ephesus of A.D. 431 and the Council of Chalcedon of A.D. 451 still survives among the Assyrians of Iran, Iraq and Syria. Its liturgical language is Syriac, and its Patriarch Mar Shimun has been obliged to reside outside Iraq since the disturbances of the year 1933. The Monophysite Churches which rejected the Council of Chalcedon of A.D. 451, insisting that after the Incarnation there was only one Nature, the Divine, in Jesus Christ, are still represented in the Middle East by the Coptic Orthodox, the Abyssinian, the Syrian Orthodox and the Apostolic Armenian (Gregorian) Churches. The head of the Coptic Church is 'the Patriarch of Alexandria', who resides in Cairo. In the Coptic liturgy the Greek, Coptic and Arabic languages are used. The largest sections of the church are to be found in Egypt and Ethiopia, with offshoots in the Sudan, Jordan and Israel. The head of the Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church is 'the Patriarch of Antioch', who has his seat at Homs in Syria. Its members are scattered over the Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, and their liturgical language is Syriac. Wherever Armenians reside, there branches of the Armenian Orthodox Church spring up. The church whose liturgy is in Armenian claims two Patriarchs and two Catholicates, of which that of Etchmiadzin in Soviet Armenia is pre-eminent.

Over against these ancient Eastern Churches stands the mighty Church of Rome which has always followed with the deepest concern the chequered course of Christianity in the Middle East. One consequence of that concern was the series of Crusades launched against the Seljuk Turks for the recovery of the Holy Places in Palestine. The Crusaders, to their shame, treated the members of the Eastern Churches as heretics and spared no severity against them. The Fourth Crusade degenerated into an attack on Constantinople which fell in A.D. 1204, and for fifty-seven years a Latin Empire and a Latin Patriarchate were established there. In the early thirteenth century the Franciscan and Dominican

Orders set out to 'convert' the Christian 'heretics' and their lead was followed later by other orders such as the Lazarites, the Capuchins, the Augustinians and the Jesuits.

Certain specific concessions were made to those Eastern Churches which were prepared to acknowledge the papal supremacy, such as the right to retain their own liturgy, to use their own language in worship, and to continue their own customs such as the marriage of clergy. And so alongside each Orthodox Church has developed a 'Uniate' Church in communion with Rome—the Greek Catholic (Melkite), whose head is 'The Patriarch of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem', normally resident in Cairo, and whose liturgy is in Greek; the Syrian Catholic, under 'The Patriarch of Antioch' with his residence in Beirut, using Syriac in its services; the Armenian Catholic, with 'The Patriarch of Constantinople' at its head and Armenian as its liturgical language; the Chaldean Catholic, whose head is 'The Patriarch of Babylon' now resident at Mosul, and whose services are in Syriac; and finally the Coptic Catholic, under the leadership of 'The Patriarch of Alexandria' who lives in Cairo, with Arabic as the liturgical language. The Roman Catholics of the western rite have a Patriarch at Jerusalem and Apostolic Delegates in Beirut, Cairo and Baghdad, and use Latin for the Mass.

The great Maronite Church of the Lebanon has a peculiar and fascinating history. At the time when the greater part of the Church at Antioch broke away from the main Christian stream and rejected the findings of the Council of Chalcedon, one section under the leadership of John Maro remained loyal to Byzantium. For a short period this group adopted the heresy called Monothelitism, which was popular with the Emperor, but was soon discarded. They then became independent and in the eight century elected their own Patriarch. During the twelfth century they made contact with the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, renounced Monothelitism and, apart from a short period in the fourteenth century, have maintained their connection with the Church of Rome ever since. Their head, 'The Patriarch of Antioch', lives in the Lebanon and the church uses Syriac as the sacred language of the liturgy.

The Protestant Churches of the Middle East are almost all without exception the product of the missionary endeavours of the Churches of the West, especially those in Great Britain and the USA. When early in the nineteenth century these churches sent their representatives to the Middle East their primary objective was the spiritual revival of the Oriental Churches, and they cherished the hope that one day these churches would become under God the instrument for the evangelisation of the non-Christian communities. After early success their teaching usually provoked bitter opposition from groups with vested interests in the status quo, and from the hierarchy of the ancient churches, who threatened the followers of the new doctrines with excommunication—a punishment with serious consequences in view of the competence of the Community Courts on all questions of personal status. The missionaries were thus constrained, often against their better judgment, to found Evangelical Churches, and they now centred their hopes in evangelistic work among the non-Christians in these new churches. To their intense disappointment, many of them have been more concerned to 'convert' members of the Orthodox Churches than to take the Christian message to the Muslims or the Jews. And so arose and grew the Armenian Evangelical Church, the Greek Evangelical Church, and the Arab Evangelical Church, in addition to branches of the confessional churches such as the Anglican, Presbyterian and Lutheran. In 1847 the Protestants in Turkey succeeded in gaining recognition from the Sublime Porte as a separate community with their own Community Council, and in 1902 the Evangelical Church in Egypt secured its own officially recognised Constitution. This movement from the Orthodox to the Protestant Churches has now, for reasons to be considered below, lost much of its momentum.

Some justification for the policy pursued by the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches in their relations with the Eastern Orthodox Churches may be found, apart from doctrinal differences, in the low state of intellectual and spiritual life into which these churches had fallen. Subjected to centuries of Muslim oppression and cut off from the revivifying

stimulus of the Renaissance and the Reformation, the ancient churches had for the sake of survival developed strong conservative tendencies, an attitude of self-defence, a tenacity of tradition, and a reluctance to accept any form of change in doctrine, worship, church order, or in their time-honoured institutions such as monasticism. Church leadership lacked the qualities of administrative, intellectual or spiritual greatness. Most churches were weakened by internal divisions and the struggle by rival groups for control of the church's administration. Thus in the Jerusalem Patriarchate of the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Arab laity and lower clergy resented the domination of a hierarchy exclusively Greek, and in almost every church the Patriarchate contested the claim of the Lay Community Council to control the expenditure of church funds. As recently as 1952 the Coptic laity appealed to General Neguib 'to purge our Patriarchate.' Another subject of contention centred round the conditions governing appointment to the highest offices of the church. Within the Community Council itself, and not seldom within a single congregation, clashes of parties and personalities existed which resulted in the transfer of splinter groups to other churches.

The fructifying influences of western culture, which in the nineteenth century stimulated new life in most Middle Eastern countries, did not leave the ancient churches untouched. Indeed the Christians for obvious reasons were often more responsive to the appeal of western civilisation than were their Muslim neighbours. The inroads of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches provided another fillip to internal reform. A large number of societies for the revival and reform of the churches sprang up, most of them gravitating around some spiritual leader who had come into contact with the new vitalising forces from the West. The aims of these societies varied. Some concentrated on providing religious instruction through day schools, Sunday schools and Christian Endeavour Societies for Christian children throughout the country, but especially in the villages where Christians and Muslims shared the same superstitious ideas and practices. Many of these day schools were

badly housed, badly equipped, badly staffed, and, in some, the teachers underpaid. But their achievements were invaluable. Others sought by evangelistic meetings, prayer groups, Bible study, and the publication of Christian literature and magazines to deepen the spiritual life of church members in towns and villages. A third group devoted itself to the establishment of hospitals, baby welfare centres, benevolent societies, and other forms of social service, chiefly for the benefit of poorer members of their community. Others were more concerned about raising the standard of church worship by the introduction of Arabic into the liturgy, by the delivery of sermons, and by improved theological instruction in the seminaries. Another objective was to secure more enlightened leadership for the church either by better instruction in the monasteries from whose monks the hierarchy was drawn, or by encouraging young university graduates to enter the monasteries. Proper supervision over church administration and finance was the aim of another group.

In the Coptic Church in Egypt there are said to be no fewer than 439 Reformed Societies. Of these a certain number can claim the support of the churches' leaders, but usually only if the reforms they propose are not too radical; often the hierarchy itself is divided in its attitude towards them. This is the case for example with the Orthodox Youth Movement in Syria and the Lebanon, in which women play an active part. In Egypt there are two societies controlled entirely by women which raise money for the support of Coptic schools in the most neglected areas.

The need for internal reform is all the greater because the Orthodox Churches are exposed not only to the encroachments of other churches but also to the streams of secularism and materialism which are pouring in from the West. Individual Christians are tempted for the sake of material advantages to abandon Christianity and embrace Islam. Because of the absence even today of any strong spiritual leadership in many Eastern Churches, some Roman Catholic and Protestant leaders consider it their duty to work for the conversion and spiritual uplift of such members of these churches as otherwise might drift away from Christianity

altogether. Others, however, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, have reached the conviction, especially in view of the efforts now being made in the ancient churches themselves to quicken their vitality and raise their intellectual standards, that a wiser long-term policy would be to co-operate with the Reform Movements and encourage those individuals who have received enlightenment elsewhere to remain within their own Church and so contribute to its intellectual and spiritual reformation. This has been the consistent policy of the Anglican Church in Egypt, which devotes its evangelistic energy to work among Muslims and seeks at the same time to promote better understanding and active co-operation between the different churches.

While in the last resort every individual Christian has the right to follow the dictates of his conscience and decide whether it is better for him to remain in his present church or to join another, it must constantly be borne in mind that the motives prompting a change of denomination or religion in the Middle East are often very mixed. Many persons alter their church allegiance merely to escape the obligations of a legal judgment rendered against them in a Community Court, or to obtain a divorce or for the sake of a marriage. These considerations have not been given sufficiently careful scrutiny in past years by the receiving church, and deception is easy.

The communal structure of the Ottoman Empire had the inevitable effect of raising barriers between one church and another, and instances of active co-operation between churches belonging to different streams of Christian doctrine were few and far between. Even within the same tradition tension may arise, as at the moment within the Eastern Orthodox Church between the Patriarch of Alexandria and the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch, or as was the case until a recent date between the Coptic Church in Egypt and its daughter church in Ethiopia. Realisation, however, of common dangers from an unsympathetic government, and of the advantages to be gained by consultation and co-operative action has helped to remove barriers and to draw church leaders together. In 1920 a Fellowship of Unity was

formed in Egypt to foster mutual understanding between members of all churches, by friendly intercourse, united study and combined services of worship. It received the support of members of most churches except the Roman Catholics and the Uniates. In 1944 the Committee of Liaison was established in Egypt to provide the non-Muslim communities with a common instrument for the defence of their rights against the encroachments of restrictive legislation. Its membership is drawn from all the Roman Catholic, Uniate, Orthodox, Anglican, Evangelical and Jewish communities, many of which appoint official delegates to the committee.

From this limited and defensive basis the Committee of Liaison has moved forward to the promotion of active co-operation between its members in such forms of Christian service as work amongst the blind and in literacy campaigns. The Coptic Orthodox, the Coptic Catholic, the Anglicans and the Evangelicals have twice participated in weeks of Christian witness, holding meetings in each other's premises. The committee has also drafted a Concordat between the Christian communities which proposes that: (*a*) No pressure shall be put on a minor to change his church affiliation without his parents' consent; (*b*) No church shall accept the application for membership of anyone whose obvious interest is to escape from some responsibility or obligation falling on him through membership of his original community; (*c*) No community shall accept any application for membership without first informing the head of the community which the individual proposes to leave, so that an opportunity may be given to the head of this community to be sure that the individual is fully aware of what he is doing; (*d*) That any misunderstanding which might arise between two communities shall be brought to the members of the Committee of Liaison who represent those two communities, so that they may work for a reconciliation and the removal of the causes of friction.

Other organisations like the YMCA and YWCA seek to bring together members of different churches in fellowship, service, study and worship. But difficulties occasionally arise

from a mistaken conception of prestige as between one church and another. Thus the Council of the Coptic Church in Egypt refuses at times to co-operate with other Christian communities, claiming that it alone represents the original Church of Egypt. Though many of the problems facing the churches of the Middle East are of a regional character, the problem of inter-church co-operation on a regional basis has not yet been tackled constructively. A beginning on a small scale has been made in the service to Palestine refugees and in the work of the Inter-Church Aid Department of the World Council of Churches. The one regional co-operative organisation—the Near East Christian Council—still represents the foreign missionary societies in the Middle East rather than the churches.

One benefit deriving from the communal structure imposed by orthodox Islamic political conceptions was the identification of church leadership with the total life of the Christian community which it served. There was no unhealthy dichotomy of conduct into religious and secular. The hierarchy was involved in every aspect of community life. But there were corresponding drawbacks. By identifying themselves with the communities' desire for autonomy church leaders incurred the suspicion or hostility of the Muslim authorities. Absorption in promoting the material welfare of the church or the community often distracted them from their primary spiritual functions. Even Evangelical communities, once they were officially recognised by the authorities, tended to become self-centred and self-contained. The defence of community 'rights' predominated over any desire to do the 'right', though even in this field many leaders, ecclesiastical and lay, did not have the courage of their convictions so as to protest openly against manifest injustices. The common attitude of Christians to the Muslim community was one of fear, suspicion and contempt, and it was not unusual for a Christian to consider he was doing no wrong if he cheated a Muslim any more than a Muslim did when he cheated a Christian. Christian intolerance towards the Muslim was as profound as Muslim intolerance towards the Christian.

If the conception of the democratic Nation-State is to oust in the Middle East the orthodox Muslim conception of the structure of society, the Christians must be the first to break out of the prison house of their own communalism. Through their closer contact with the Christians of the West they are better qualified than any other group to mediate the best elements of western culture. It is not enough for them to fight the giants of ignorance, superstition, poverty and disease within the confines of their own community; they must join issue with them on a national scale. Their communal institutions, educational, medical or social, should be prepared to open their doors to any who will benefit by them, irrespective of their race or religion. The difficulties confronting Middle East governments in discovering professional men and women who are willing to give their services where the need is greatest, i.e. in the rural areas, offer a special challenge to Christian doctors, nurses, teachers and social workers. In the past foreign missionary societies were the pioneers of many forms of educational, medical and social service, but today the opportunity is given to the national churches to blaze the trail. Some Christian individuals are already helping to create new standards of integrity in the Civil Service by their efficiency, honesty and freedom from corruption; but few Christians have yet heard the call to devote their life to grappling with the political and economic problems of the modern Nation-State.

The prevailing defensive negative attitude of the Christian communities is self-destructive. The future of the Middle East Nation-States still hangs in the balance, and the Christian communities may be able to tip the scales in the right direction. By refusing for themselves special rights and privileges they may more assuredly safeguard the rights of all. Christian leadership may make a unique contribution to the Nation-State in this critical phase of the history of its development. Over against an extreme nationalism it can set the values of international co-operation in a framework of world order. In place of a narrow interpretation of Arab culture which would identify it with Islam and Islam alone, it can demonstrate its own loyalty to the Nation-State and to the

advancement of an Arab civilisation, which is at once comprehensive, tolerant and democratic. Taking its stand on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it can urge the recognition by the state of all fundamental rights and personal liberties, not least freedom of religious inquiry and affiliation. The democracy for which it will work will be of a form suitable for embodiment in institutions and practices characteristic of Arab mentality. The cultural pattern of the Middle East will be different from but complementary to and compatible with that of the western world. It will strain every nerve for social and economic reconstruction to be achieved by speedy and far-reaching reform, and not by violent revolution. By its more profound and deeper thinking it will bring to light the deceptive claim of Communism and other short-cuts to Utopia.

But what of the Christian Church in the Middle East as an evangelistic agency, and what of the relations between Christianity and Islam? There were periods in the early history of Christian-Muslim relations when protagonists of the orthodox churches like John of Damascus and El Kindi conducted lengthy controversies by word or in writing with the spokesmen of Islam. The main lines of argument were cast in the scholastic mould, and more often than not the field of controversy was determined by the Muslim disputant. Common subjects for discussion were the historicity of the Koran, the accuracy of the Scriptures, the character of the Prophet and the morality of the Muslim people. Great faith was pinned to metaphysical arguments, and the purpose of the debate appeared to be rather the uncovering of the weaknesses of Islam or the defence of Christianity than the winning of converts. Christians living under Muslim rule had to exercise caution in their statements, though under certain Muslim rulers wide freedom of expression was allowed; whereas Christians resident in the Byzantine Empire could usually give free voice to their opinions. This period of intellectual intercourse came to an end with the Crusades and with the increasing crystallisation of Islamic thought into rigid doctrinal systems.

The Crusades which were embarked upon by the Christians

of the West for a strange medley of reasons—to fight the Lord's battles, to recover the Holy Land, to visit its sacred shrines, to advance trade or discovery—served merely to embitter relations between Christians and Muslims for many generations. The Franks showed no less cruelty than the Turks, and gave a poor exhibition of Christian virtue. Some Crusaders embraced Islam either because they were captives of the Turks or as fugitives from justice, or in order to gain some specific advantage. They were popularly known as 'the renegades'. During the centuries which followed the Turks constituted Christendom's most dangerous foe, and relations between East and West were not improved when Christian monarchs sought an alliance with the Mongols. Fear and hatred were the dominant elements in the Christian attitude towards the Turks.

The mediaeval Church was woefully ignorant of Islam and its doctrines, and the polemic it waged against them was neither reasonable nor fair. In the thirteenth century the Dominicans and Franciscans began, with encouragement of Popes like Gregory IX and Innocent IV, to take a spiritual interest in Muslims and their conversion, and several suffered martyrdom. Isolated individuals took the trouble to study Islam and composed treatises with the purpose of convincing Muslims of the error of their ways. Notable among these Christian apologists were William of Tripolis, Ricoldus de Monte Crucis and Ramon Lull. That curious blend of Christian love and human fear which characterised the mediaeval approach to the problem of Islam is shown in the life of Ramon Lull who at one time urged the foundation of colleges for the training of missionaries to Muslims and wrote logical theses for their conversion, and at another called for a Crusade and the establishment of a unified order for armed propaganda. The treatment of the Muslims in Spain, where there were persecutions, mass baptisms, and the alternative offered of baptism or death, was a disgrace to the Christian Church. In 1609 the Moriscos or baptised Moors were expelled from the country. The great leaders of the Protestant Reformation shared the prevailing attitude of fear and contempt for Muslims. It was only subsequent to the publication

in 1734 of Sale's translation of the Koran that the Christian world began to acquire a more reasonable conception of Islam. The occupation of Muslim territories by Christian powers during the period of imperialistic expansion, their intervention on behalf of the Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire, and the favour they showed to foreign missions and to the Christian communities under the mandates, served merely to arouse Muslim resentment still further.

The problem of presenting Christianity to the Muslim world is thus complicated from the outset by a legacy of misunderstanding and suspicion. The eastern churches have long since lost any evangelistic fervour they ever possessed. Fear of reprisals has driven all other considerations out of their minds. Muslim law enjoins that to persuade a Muslim to leave Islam is a capital offence and that apostasy from Islam is punishable by death. These two factors alone were sufficient to snuff out any missionary spirit in the Christian Church. Yet the Greek Orthodox Church still retains a ritual for the reception of converts from Islam, though it is seldom used. The Coptic Church re-admits Christians who have declared themselves Muslims in a service of recantation and repentance, in spite of the fact that technically by Muslim law a man once a Muslim is always a Muslim. In general the eastern churches disapprove of any missionary work among Muslims, both because they fear its potential repercussions on their own status, and also because they doubt the possibility of genuine conversion. So often have changes in community affiliation in the Middle East been prompted by ulterior motives, so often have so-called converts lapsed that the majority of eastern Christians treat the 'convert' with most profound suspicion. Few Christian parents would give him their daughter in marriage lest he revert to Islam. Few would welcome him into the fellowship of their home. Discouraged by his reception by the Christian community, failing to find in the formal services of the church a substitute for the Zikr and other Islamic ceremonies and observances, and repelled by some of the seemingly idolatrous practices of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, the convert

often goes back to his own people and his former religion, and so the conviction of the churches is confirmed that sincere conversion is an impossibility.

This same lack of sympathy for missionary work among Muslims holds true also for most Roman Catholic and Evangelical Churches. The former have concentrated in the main on winning the allegiance to Rome of oriental Christians. The latter, composed for the most part of former members of the eastern churches, share the same mentality as these churches, with the one outstanding exception of the young church in Iran, a large proportion of whose members are themselves converts from Islam. On the other hand some of the reform movements within the orthodox churches and some of the youth groups in the Roman Catholic and Evangelical Churches have caught the missionary spirit and are endeavouring to witness to Muslims as well as to unconverted Christians. Statistics indicate that as many Muslims are baptised annually into the Coptic Church as into all the other churches in Egypt combined.

The almost insuperable difficulties standing in the way of efforts to convince the Muslim of the truth of Christianity are too well known to need elaboration. There are the external obstacles arising from governmental prohibitions of Christian teaching to Muslim pupils in schools, or the objection of the authorities to Christian preaching in hospitals. There are the psychological hurdles to be surmounted of persuading Muslims to read the Christian Scriptures, Christian literature or Christian magazines. The free distribution of such literature merely lowers its value in the eyes of the recipient. But the greatest difficulties of all emanate from the teaching of Islam itself. The infallible Koran claims to supersede the Christian revelation, and denies the facts of the incarnation, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; it misrepresents the Trinity and describes the Christian Scriptures as unreliable. The Prophet Mohammed is said to be a more practical guide and pattern for human conduct on the ground that the teaching of Jesus is too ascetic or too idealistic, or that it lays too much store by the virtues of meekness, humility and submissiveness. Christianity, so Muslims maintain, is difficult to

understand and still more difficult to carry out; while Islam is a natural religion, simple in both its doctrines and its demands.

If the Muslim cares to turn a critical eye on the actual moral standards of Christian individuals and of Christian society, he can find plenty at which to point the finger of reproof. All round him he sees evidence of the low ethical standards of oriental Christians. The so-called Christian West has exported to the Middle East plays, films, books, magazines and newspapers of doubtful moral quality, habits of economic and political sharp practice, drunkenness, dance halls and other social institutions, which a Muslim of sincere religious belief would without hesitation condemn. It was in the Christian West that two world wars took their start. It is the West that manifests race and colour pride.

The methods adopted by Christian nations and missionaries from the West to convince the Muslim of the truth of Christianity have varied from one generation to another, and from one country to another. The controversial method popular in the nineteenth century and associated with the names of Henry Martyn, Pfänder, Tisdall and Lefroy, is now out of fashion. By reaction it encouraged Muslims to produce books in defence of Islam and to launch attacks on Christianity. The converts it won were more often intellectually convinced than spiritually converted. In any case most Muslim countries would not allow this method today as being contrary to both public order and good morals.

A more popular and convincing method in use today is that of seeking to present Jesus Christ as the Light of the world and the Mediator of a more abundant life through the agency of a Christian school, hospital, welfare centre or other institution of social service. Reliance is placed not solely on special periods of Christian worship, preaching, prayer or Scripture study, but on the impact made by the whole atmosphere of the institution, the personal contact with the pupil or patient, the emphasis on character-training and the combination of freedom with discipline and of human sympathy with efficient service. It is hoped that the Muslim will through these channels catch a glimpse of the living Christ at work in His Church in the service of human need and

suffering. The success of this method presupposes a Christian staff working together harmoniously in a Christian spirit, and these conditions are not easily fulfilled. Excessive absorption in standards of technical efficiency plus governmental supervision may reduce the level of the Christian institution to that of any secular institution of the same kind. Often the opportunities for friendship with former pupils or patients are never followed up because of lack of adequate staff or because of a short-sighted institutional policy.

Muslim beneficiaries from Christian social services may, however, fall into the mistake of misunderstanding the motive which inspires such services. They may construe it in Islamic terms as a desire on the part of Christians to acquire merit by good works. Christian deeds, to be understood, must be supplemented and elucidated by the spoken or written word. Here, however, misconstruction and lack of comprehension are a common experience. The Christian religious vocabulary in Arabic and that of the Muslim are widely divergent. The same words and ideas convey different meanings to the two communities. Few foreign missionaries and few national Christians have ever probed deeply into Islam and its religious thought. Still fewer have entered sympathetically into the minds of the Muslims around them and realised how utterly different are the religious concepts and experiences, for example of a sheikh from El Azhar University, a modern Effendee, a member of a Dervish order and an animistically-minded peasant. Not many Christians have examined the doctrines of the so-called heretical Islamic sects with their ideas of incarnation, emanation and transmigration of souls. Too much Christian preaching is cast in one rigid theological mould, divorced from the specific needs of the individual listener.

A common accusation levelled at Christian institutions is that they exploit the immaturity of the adolescent or the physical weakness of the hospital patient. Every true Christian seeks to avoid all unworthy methods, and the voluntary adoption of a conscience clause in schools is one way of disarming Muslim criticism. Other charges made against Christians are secret baptism and the offer of inducements to

inquirers. Here again Christians can silence their critics by refraining from any action which would give the impression of being underhand. In periods of popular excitement imagination runs riot, and Christian missions are accused of using hypnotism, force, drugs and immoral procedures to secure adherents. The only answer to such charges are Christian patience, forbearance and love.

The ideal situation is reached when Muslims can be persuaded to share their religious experiences with other Christian friends. A Dominican group in Cairo has formed a society called Ikhwan El Safa with this end in view. Muslim leaders, including Professors from El Azhar University, discuss with Christians the significance of the religious concepts of the two faiths in an atmosphere of friendship and goodwill. Occasionally a Muslim mystic may be discovered who is prepared to talk over his religious experience with a mystically-minded Christian. It should never be forgotten that Christians too have much to learn from Muslims—their spirit of reverence in worship, their utter surrender to God's will, their freedom from self-consciousness in religious witness, and their comprehensive brotherhood. The Christian for his part cannot do better than let the Muslim see Christ as He is in the pages of the New Testament or manifested in the saintly self-sacrificing life of a Christian individual or a Christian family.

Though the number of converts from Islam to Christianity is small, the indebtedness of the Muslim world to Christian teaching should not be minimised. Islam from its inception has owed much to Christianity, though the Christians with whom the Prophet Mohammed made contact were mostly schismatics and heretics. Many Koranic stories are drawn from Jewish and Christian sources, and many Christian ideas and sayings have penetrated Muslim traditions. Christian monasticism and asceticism helped to mould Sufiism, and the controversies with Christian theologians led indirectly to the emergence in Islam of numerous liberal and heretical movements of thought. Islamic theology was largely fashioned on the anvil of Hellenistic philosophy and Christian doctrine, and it was chiefly through the work of Christian scholars that

classical literature was transmitted to Muslim leaders. Persian poetry is full of sayings about Jesus Christ and His teaching. So deeply indeed has Christian thought penetrated Islam that Muslim apologists frequently repaint the life and character of Mohammed to make them accord with Christian conceptions of goodness and virtue, while such theological doctrines as that of the pre-existent life of Mohammed owe not a little to the Christian doctrine of the Logos. Some Christian students of Islam, like John of Damascus, have reached the conclusion that Islam is more a Christian heresy than a new religion.

This process of accommodation to Christian ideas may well continue, and its importance should on no account be despised. The vital factor is that the Muslim should have correct beliefs about God, man and nature, whether or not he acknowledges the source of his ideas. Moreover, the removal of psychological barriers between Christians and Muslims is an indispensable prelude to free interchange of thought and experience. Islam is today facing a crisis in its own history, and Christians have a function to fulfil in helping Muslims to adjust their thinking and spiritual outlook to the challenge of a revolutionary social and economic situation, and to meet the demands of modern scientific, historical and political thought. But once more the question must be asked whether Islam can provide the spiritual and moral force required for transforming the very foundations of Middle East society, or will the Muslim revolutionary be obliged to look to other sources for inspiration; or as a third possibility will the area continue to stagnate and decline?

Profitable co-operation between Christians and Muslims will not take the form, as some have proposed, of an alliance between Christianity and Islam merely to withstand the inroads of Communism, though there was not long ago talk of an understanding between the Vatican and the diplomatic representatives of Middle East States along these lines. A purely defensive programme aiming at the maintenance of the status quo would be equivalent to a death sentence on both religions. Nor will Christians and Muslims co-operate merely in order to pursue the mirage of some super-philo-

sophy which treats all religion as relative and of secondary significance. Not only would such a procedure be untrue to the genius of both religions, which are absolute, universal and missionary in their claims, but would serve merely to weaken religious faith at a time when the need for it is pressing. The idea once popular among certain Christian educationists that modern scientific and historical research would undermine confidence in Islam and pave the way for the acceptance of the Christian religion, has now been generally abandoned because the actual result has been very different from what was anticipated. Disillusioned Muslims have turned to secularism and the search for pleasure rather than to some other religion. The Christian's positive contribution is so to interpret the constructive and uplifting aspects of western thought to the Muslim intellectuals as to encourage within Islam itself 'a receptivity, open-mindedness, and positive soul-searching which characterise the most daring and creative of Muslims throughout history.' This can only be done if there exists mutual affection, friendship and confidence. At this point Christian educational institutions often fall down. They give their students professional training; they introduce them to the priceless treasures of western culture; but they do not penetrate deeply enough into the Muslim soul to aid the student as he wrestles with the spiritual problem of reconciling this flood of new ideas with his Islamic heritage. A revitalised Islamic culture, impregnated with the wholesome elements of western civilisation, would find its place in the pattern of world cultures and help to provide the basis for an international order.

For Islam to discover within itself the resources necessary for reconstructing the life of society in the Middle East along the lines of a modern democratic Nation-State, in which there will be impartial justice and equal opportunity for all, a transformation so radical must be undergone that conservative Muslims may well say that this is not what they know as Islam. It will call for more penetrating self-criticism, more open-mindedness, and less complacency than Islamic leadership has as yet manifested. The present tendency must be abandoned of searching for some scapegoat on whom the

blame can be laid for whatever is wrong in the Middle East, be it the Western Powers, the landowners, or the reactionaries. The price must be paid of critical self-examination and the hard road trodden of radical and revolutionary thinking. If in the end Muslims reach the conclusion that Islam is spiritually and ethically unequal to the strains of the modern world, is the Christian community qualified and ready to show them a better way? Can Christians recapture 'the positive essence of Christianity—its joyfulness and confidence and humility and suffering, and manifest their Christianity as a living faith of love and testimony and martyrdom and forgiveness?'

Friendly theological conversations with Muslims do not eliminate the Christian duty of bearing witness to the truth as the Christians see it. In fact to be of any value they presuppose it. The practical issue, however, soon arises as to the wisdom of encouraging the Muslim, whose interest in Christianity has been aroused, to accept Christian teaching with an ultimate view to baptism. So great is the psychological strain to which the baptised convert from Islam is subjected, and so complete the severance from the community which follows his public confession of faith, that some Christian leaders advocate the cessation, at least for the present, of the baptism of converts, and prefer that the 'followers of Jesus' remain as a leavening force among their own people. Apart from the fundamental theological question as to whether a man can be a Christian and grow in the Christian life if he is not grafted into membership of the visible church, there is a very serious psychological problem for a secret believer living in a Muslim environment; namely whether he can be true to his Christian conviction and yet conform to the practices of his Muslim relatives. Once he confesses his Christian faith he will, in most Middle East countries, be ejected from the Muslim community. The true answer would seem to be not that the genuine inquirer should not be baptised, but that he should not be baptised in isolation. To convince a family of the truth of the Christian faith is ultimately more hopeful than to convince an individual, and to change the life of a village community is best of all.

In evangelistic work among Muslims, the national Christian who is afire with missionary zeal has the advantage in almost every respect over his missionary colleague. He already knows the language better and his mental outlook approximates more closely to that of his Muslim neighbour. The missionary is suspect, not only because he is a Christian missionary, but because he is a foreigner. All missionaries are considered to be the political and cultural agents of a foreign power, a suspicion which is confirmed in the Muslim mind when Christians lay emphasis upon the merits of their own national culture. Only a spiritually alert and missionary-minded national church can in the long run present the Christian message in a convincing way to the Muslim community, and provide a spiritual home for any who respond.

Of the work of the Christian Church in Israel, relatively little has yet been mentioned. For understandable reasons, Arab Christians in Israel are impeded by formidable psychological barriers from direct Christian witness to their Jewish neighbours. The number of Hebrew Christians is small and their position difficult and precarious. Most orthodox Jews are extremely sensitive about the evangelistic activities of foreign missionaries, and accuse them of recourse to pressure and bribery in winning converts. On December 20, 1952, the Chief Rabbinate in Israel addressed to all Rabbis and religious officials the statement that: 'Over four hundred emissaries of Satan, missionaries . . . among them baptised Jews, traitors to their origin, have settled like a swarm of locusts on the land.' Two days later the Prime Minister, Mr. Ben Gurion, stated in the parliament that the government would not tolerate any religious compulsion from whatever side it might come. The only limits would be the security of the state and the honour of the individual. The liberal Jew Schalom Ben Chorin came to the defence of the Hebrew Christians claiming that they were loyal citizens of the State of Israel. He did, however, plead that 'instead of stealing souls on one side and tirades of abuse on the other, we must have a Jewish-Christian spiritual dialogue which will lead the two sides to know one another, and so to enrich one another religiously. In place of opposition we must have

fellowship and work together.' The problems facing the Christian Churches in Israel correspond in most respects to those in Muslim lands. There is the same situation of a formalised religion trying to adapt itself to the demands of modern life and to come to terms with western thought. There are the same divisions within Judaism as within Islam of the ultra-conservatives, the agnostics, the modernists and the indifferent. There is the same need for theological conversation between Christians and Jews, having in mind the possibility of a transformed Judaism. There is the same need and opportunity for faithful Christian witness and service and the building up of a Christian Church spiritually awake and alert to its many opportunities.

There are in Israel today converts to Judaism from Christianity whose home was once Sicily and the USA. There are also Christ-believing Jews, who do not associate with any Gentile Church, under the leadership of Rabbi Daniel Zion, formerly chief Rabbi of Bulgaria. Israel, however, like the Arab States, has yet to learn the full meaning of religious freedom and the right of the individual, both to preach his faith without hindrance and to change his religion. In Israel as in Muslim lands the major responsibility for evangelism rests with the Christians of the country, and they are ultimately the best qualified for the task.

There are, however, certain responsibilities in relation to the present situation in the Middle East which the churches of the West are best fitted to perform. Islam looks on the West as a whole and does not differentiate between the religious and the secular, between Christianity and Christendom. There is scant prospect of a profound and widespread response to the Christian message in Muslim lands until the impact of the West on the Middle East has been purged of its more degrading influences. It is for the Christian Churches of the West to exercise some control over the ethical values exported to the Middle East by the printed page, the theatre or the radio. Again the unfavourable reaction of Middle East States to western diplomacy over the past three decades challenges the Christian Churches of the West to impress upon their own governments the vital importance of maintaining

the highest standards of justice and equity in all their international relations; not only because this is the right course, but also because only so can they command the respect and co-operation of the states of the Middle East in any plans they may have for a defence pact. The time is ripe for international co-operation in several fields, in the development of the economic and industrial potentialities of the area, in effecting a peaceful but revolutionary change in the structure of society, in promoting an international outlook which will transcend the limitations of a narrow nationalism, and in establishing a framework of democracy adapted to the special conditions and character of the Middle East. One sure result of the easing of international tension would be an improvement in the position of foreign missionary institutions. But what is still more important, a fuller understanding of the implications of the democratic Nation-State and the implementation of an international code of fundamental human rights would give birth in the Middle East to a new conception of religious freedom and of the rights of minorities.

On the vital question of Arab-Jew relations, the Christian Churches have a unique responsibility. Hitherto they have been far too much concerned about such mundane matters as the protection of the Holy Places and of the property rights of Christian Churches and Missions. What matters is not that Jerusalem should be made safe for Christian pilgrims or for missionary institutions, but that it should become once more a centre from which spiritual life and light will radiate through the three worlds of Islam, Judaism and Christianity. At present all three religions in the Middle East are suffering from malaise, and stand in dire need of regeneration. The relief work of the Christian Churches, Missions and voluntary agencies among the Palestine refugees has won for them the respect and gratitude of Muslim governments and Muslim peoples, especially when these services have been divorced from any ulterior aims. But the Christian contribution to a permanent solution of the Arab-Jew problem has been negligible. Only too often Christian Churches and individuals from the West have approached the problem along the lines of a misconceived notion of Old Testament prophecy. And so

their thinking has been conditioned in one direction. On the other hand there are Christian groups which are conscious of nothing save the sufferings of the Arab refugees, and are blind to the needs of the Jewish people. Partisanship, not disinterested study of the problem, has characterised the attitude of most Christian leaders from the West.

A word must be said in passing about the perplexing spiritual problem created for Arab Christians by the establishment of the State of Israel. All references in the Old Testament or the New Testament to 'Israel' or to 'Zion' grate upon their ears. Whereas Christians from the West would claim that the Christian Church is the new 'Israel', Arab Christians are now disposed to reject *in toto* the Old Testament as a Jewish book which is historically unsound and ethically unsatisfactory, and to substitute some other word for 'Israel' in New Testament passages.

Finally, the churches of the West are called upon to assume a special role in strengthening the churches of the Middle East. To these churches they can mediate the riches of western thought, both through the institutions which they set up in the area, through periodic visits from church leaders, and through scholarships for Christian leaders from the Middle East to engage in advanced study in the West. In this way they can help them in their struggle to adjust themselves to the challenging demands of a new world order. Their aim will be the building up of the life of these churches, not just for their own sake, but that they may be centres of co-operation with Muslim leaders, of pioneering in national service, of evangelistic activity, and also of a home life for converts. They will seek neither to press on them a narrow international denominationalism, nor to encourage the establishment of a national church whose outlook is tinged and circumscribed by purely national concerns. Their objective will be the dissemination of a truly ecumenical spirit, at once national and international. They can in multitudinous ways support the churches of the Middle East by their gifts, their counsel and their prayers, but in all their activities their aim will be the promotion of national Christian leadership and the transformation of the foreign mission into the handmaid

rather than the master of the indigenous church. There are still geographical areas and areas of human life in the Middle East into which foreign missions from the West are called upon to penetrate first, but always with the thought in mind that the 'Christian Churches must increase and the foreign missions decrease.' So-called 'marginal' areas and countries where Arab culture is not so deeply ingrained offer immediate prospects of more speedy success for foreign missions than the centres of Islamic culture; but he would be a bold prophet who would say with any assurance that therefore these marginal areas should have priority.

The Middle East today is a centre of bitter tension, profound suspicion, and grave misunderstandings—the legacy of the errors of past history and the consequences of uncompromising nationalist intransigence today. Relations between the Arab States and the Western Powers on the one hand, and between them and Israel on the other, have reached an impasse. Humanly speaking there is no way out, and the prospects of a peaceful settlement by negotiations are not good. The whole area is seething with unrest and dissatisfaction, and few (except possibly members of the ruling clique) are happy about either political or economic conditions. Islam, Christianity and Judaism are all being shaken to their foundations by the impact of new forces, and the adherents of all three faiths are responding to the challenge in a variety of ways. The need for a new spirit is admitted, a ministry of reconciliation, forgiveness and progress by peaceful change. For the convinced Christian the basic question is whether the churches of the West and the churches of the Middle East can by their respective contribution lead the restless, unsettled and mutually antagonistic peoples of the area into 'the way of peace.'

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Turkey (1950)	20,936,524
Iran (1951) estimated at	19,139,563 (probably between 14 and 16 million)
Egypt (1947 census)	18,966,767
Algeria (including the Army)	8,876,016
Morocco (1951)	7,700,000 Muslims + 200,000 Jews + 363,354 others
Iraq (1947 census)	4,799,500
Syria (1950)	3,252,687
Tunisia (1946)	2,832,978 Arabs + 70,971 Jews + 239,549 Europeans
Saudi Arabia	about 2,000,000
Israel (1953)	1,653,000
Jordan	about 1,257,000 (400,000 in West Jordan; 390,000 in East Jordan and 467,000 refugees)
The Lebanon (1949)	1,246,580
Libya (1938)	763,179 Muslims + 30,046 Jews + 89,098 Italians + 6,078 others)

POPULATION OF THE LARGEST CITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Cairo	2,090,654
Tehran	1,010,000
Istanbul	1,000,022
Baghdad	805,293
Tel-Aviv/Jaffa	400,000
Damascus	335,060
Ankara	286,781
Beirut	201,451

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